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MAJOR PLAYERS IN CANADA'S COFFEE MARKET TRY TO EDGE EACH OTHER OUT TO SURVIVE — WILL A PATRIOTIC BLEND OF CANADIANA BE ENOUGH TO KEEP TIM HORTONS ON TOP? PAGE 14

Go grab your calendar, put a bird on it

Mark the date — Portlandia is back next week, featuring a surreal sketch entitled The Celery Incident PAGE 16

Anti-gay bill now the law in Uganda

Country's president says the bill was necessary because the West is busy promoting homosexuality PAGE 7

Wanted: the ousted leader of Ukraine

Warrant issued for Viktor Yanukovych in the killing of protesters, who Russia calls gun-toting thugs PAGES 10 & 11

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Ford on offensive against new rivals

Mayoral race. Transit, taxes and trash talk the main focus in early days of campaign

John Tory and Karen Stintz talked in broad themes. Rob Ford talked about them.

Tory, the former provincial Progressive Conservative leader, and Stintz, the councillor and former TTC chair, registered Monday to run for mayor of Toronto. Speaking in generalities, both promised to build a downtown subway relief line, keep taxes low and bring the city together. Neither mentioned Ford's name.

Ford attacked them directly. Speaking to talk radio, he said both Stintz and Tory are "revenue-tool-happy" taxers who do not truly believe subways are preferable to light-rail transit. Neither, he said, has nearly the record he does.

All three attempted to dodge questions on transit taxes. Tory would not say how he would pay for a downtown relief line, promising details "in due course." Stintz claimed she could build the relief line without any new taxes — though the example she cited, the Scarborough subway extension, required a dedicated property tax.

And Ford refused to explicitly acknowledge that he, too, had endorsed that new tax. He threatened to walk away from a media scrum when he was pressed to explain how he can denounce Tory and Stintz on transit taxes after imposing one himself.

Tory said he is running to make Toronto "liveable," "affordable," and "functional." He said he will run a "positive campaign" even if attacked.

Implicitly contrasting himself with Ford, he said he would be "a mayor that's going to focus on getting people to work together to get things done."

He sure does

"I'll put my record up against anyone's — I have a record."
Mayor Rob Ford

Offering a few more specifics than Tory, Stintz said she would alleviate traffic congestion, seek to reconfigure the eastern Gardiner Expressway, pursue a bid for the 2026 World Cup and make neighbourhoods safer.

Tory is on record as saying new taxes are necessary for transit expansion. Soon after campaign manager Doug Ford alleged a pro-Tory media bias — "Do you guys have John Tory stickers on?" — Rob Ford said on Newstalk 1010 that Tory and Stintz share a "tax, tax, tax" outlook.

Despite their support for the relief line, Ford accused them of favouring light rail, which he described again as "fancy streetcars." Ford said Toronto is "10 times better off than it was three years ago." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ex-provincial PC leader John Tory formally enters the race at city hall on Monday. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A HERO'S WELCOME FOR GIFTED AND GILDED OLYMPIANS

Canadian Dara Howell has her gold medal for slopestyle skiing hung around her neck by her young cousin as she arrives at Pearson Airport from Sochi on Monday. Story, page 36.

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Police use-of-force comes under watchdog's scrutiny

Public interest. OIPRD is the third body to launch a probe after public outrage over Sammy Yatim's shooting

Ontario's police watchdog says it is time for change within the Toronto force and has launched an independent review into use-of-force tactics and police treatment of people with mental illness.

The new public probe by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director is only the second of its kind since the agency was formed in October 2009. It will focus on the Toronto service, looking at officer training as well as how officers interact with the public — specifically those in crisis or experiencing mental illness.

A final report containing recommendations will be released to the public as early as September.

The OIPRD's first review, which looked at policing during the G20 summit in 2010, released in 2012, also focused heavily on the Toronto police and included some scathing criticism of institutional failures and alleged misconduct.

Director Gerry McNeilly said the latest review was spurred by public complaints, which have focused increasingly on police use-of-force policies, and recent high-profile shootings — including that of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim, who died last summer after being shot and Tasered on a Dundas streetcar.

McNeilly said many of the key issues from the G20 report remain problematic today. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Analysis

Chief being investigated

Bill Blair

Police Chief Bill Blair is under investigation by the OIPRD. The complaint against Blair is in two parts and was submitted by Coun. Doug Ford.

Ford's criticism involves a fishing trip that Blair allegedly went on last year with Police Services Board member Andy Pringle.

The second part came out of a 2013 news conference at which Blair indicated police had possession of the Rob Ford crack video and said he was disappointed in the mayor.

The police board said the actions "may constitute misconduct." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Health. Ovary removal dramatically lowers risk of death, study finds

A young, cancer-free Toronto woman says her decision to have both ovaries and both breasts removed was daunting, but not difficult.

After learning two years ago that she tested positive for a genetic mutation that predisposed her to cancer, opting to undergo the surgeries to lessen her risk of getting the disease was a "no-brainer," says Leela Goldhar-Waxman, 38.

Today, she is even more convinced she made the right decision. Goldhar-Waxman participated in a clinical trial — the results of which were published Monday in the Journal of Clinical Oncology — that showed that women like her who get both ovaries removed reduce their risk of death from any cause, including cancer, by 77 per cent.

The study by Women's College Hospital looked at the impact of preventative oophorectomies — removal of ovaries — on women who carry a BRCA1 or BRCA2 genetic mutation. The BRCA1/2 genes belong to a class of genes that typically act to protect individuals from acquiring cancer, yet women who inherit a mutated form of the genes have a high risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers.

It followed 5,783 women over six years and found an 80 per cent reduction in the risk of ovarian, Fallopian tube and peritoneal cancers. As well, it found a 68 per cent lower risk of death from all causes in women who had previously had breast cancer. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Leela Goldhar-Waxman, 38, had both of her ovaries and breasts removed after learning she carries a genetic mutation that predisposed her to cancer. Husband Mark Waxman is seen in the background with their children Olivia, Ezra and Yale (and Joey the dog). KEITH BEATY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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4 A snapshot of the official mayoral candidates (so far)

John Tory

Recent gigs: Former leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative party; Newstalk 1010 talk show host.
Platform: Prioritizes a downtown relief subway line and promises to keep property taxes low, although he has been a vocal advocate of the need for new taxes to pay for transit.
Hits and misses: In 2003, he stepped down from his job at Rogers Cable to embark on his first bid for mayor. He began the race with low name recognition and single-digit support, but wound up overtaking better-known candidates Barbara Hall and John Nunziata to finish a strong second to David Miller. Soon after, he ran successfully for leader of the provincial Conservatives.

Karen Stintz

Recent gigs: Former TTC chair, councillor for Ward 16 since 2003.
Platform: Downtown relief line, reform the land transfer tax, support a joint Toronto-U.S. bid for the 2026 World Cup and explore a "hybrid" solution for the east Gardiner Expressway.
Hits and misses: In 2012, Stintz persuaded council to return to above-ground light rail lines on Finch Avenue, Sheppard Avenue and the Scarborough RT corridor. The vote marked a resounding defeat for Rob Ford and won Stintz fans on the left. Months later, she and Coun. Glenn De Baeremaeker unveiled a 21-line, $30 billion transit-and-tax plan that included a Scarborough subway. The plan was voted down by council. In 2013, Stintz joined with Ford to push for a Scarborough subway.

Rob Ford

Recent gigs: Mayor since 2010; pseudo-mayor since council stripped him of his powers in November.
Platform: "Subways, subways, subways" — he plans to win Sheppard and Finch subways to replace planned rail lines and has named a downtown relief line his "third" transit priority. He remains publicly opposed to new taxes to pay for transit, although he supported a property tax hike to pay for the Scarborough subway.
Hits and misses: Kept his campaign promise to eliminate the vehicle registration tax. He also privatized garbage pickup west of Yonge Street. Council was pushed to the brink by revelations that police recovered a video of the mayor appearing to smoke crack cocaine.

David Soknacki

Recent gigs: City councillor from 1999-2006, businessman, columnist for Torstar-owned Metroland.
Platform: Pledges to scrap the Scarborough subway and return to the fully funded LRT to save taxpayers money. He has also suggested he would oppose a move to outsource garbage pickup across the city.
Hits and misses: He entered politics in 1994 as a Scarborough councillor and was elected to amalgamated council in a 1999 by-election. He successfully proposed a ban on politicians hiring immediate family members, opposed pay hikes for councillors and donated a portion of his council salary back to the city. As budget chief for former mayor David Miller, he disagreed with the left-leaning mayor on many issues. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ALL PHOTOS TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Electoral reform. Wynne is 'open to discussions'

Premier Kathleen Wynne sounds open to electoral changes that could one day see "ranked" ballots in municipal elections.

Wynne said Monday that rookie Liberal MPP Mitzie Hunter (Scarborough-Guildwood) will soon table a private member's bill that would replace the "first-past-the-post" system in civic votes.

"This is an idea that has come forward from (Toronto) city council. I think it is an interesting idea. I think these ideas need to be discussed," the premier said at Queen's Park.

"There is a private member's bill that will be introduced into the legislature, and I really look forward to the debate," she said.

"I don't think we can just assume that the systems that have been in place for decades are the systems that necessarily have to stay in place. But I have to look at the merits."

In a ranked-ballot system, a candidate must win a true majority of votes, whereas in the traditional first-past-the-post system the winner need only garner more support than any other candidate.

Voters could choose a favourite candidate or rank their top three picks in order of preference, with the victor determined through an instant run-off.

Hunter's bill, which would amend the Municipal Elections Act, would only apply to civic elections, and probably not until 2018.

Wynne was careful not to commit to a ranked ballot provincially.

"Remember, we're the party that brought forward the idea of changing the electoral system in Ontario. We had citizens' assemblies. We had a referendum on that issue. So we are open to having these discussions," she said, referring to the 2007 election, when Ontarians rejected electoral reform.

Last June, Toronto council asked the province to allow the city to switch to a ranked ballot system similar to that in place in San Francisco and London, England.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Missing piece

Olivia Chow will be the last piece of the campaign puzzle — she is expected to be on the ballot by the end of March. The popular MP enjoys high name recognition and is leading in the polls. Said one insider: "This is a long campaign. There is no hurry." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

RICK MERCER REPORT
This week, Rick goes on a fun-filled date with Jan Arden in Calgary and her hometown, Bragg Creek.
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Health

City to publicly post all outbreaks in hospitals, nursing homes

For the first time, all outbreaks in Toronto nursing homes, retirement homes and hospitals will be publicly posted on a city website.

Each Thursday, Toronto Public Health will now detail outbreaks by nature, institution name and address, as well as indicate whether it is still active. The reports will include both gastroenteric outbreaks (such as those causing nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever) and respiratory infections (which result in symptoms such as coughing, runny noses, sore throats, fevers). TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Crime

Grey Cup ring stolen from former Tiger-Cats owner

George Grant, former owner of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, is asking for the return of his "priceless" 1999 Grey Cup ring. The ring was stolen from his Toronto home during a break-in. Grant says he's not offering a reward but hopes whoever took the ring will return it as a matter of conscience. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A 1999 Grey Cup ring
COURTESY TORONTO POLICE

No warrant

Judge says police showed 'blatant' disregard for Charter rights in bust

A Superior Court judge said detectives on the Toronto police drug squad showed a "blatant" and "deliberate" disregard for the Charter rights of three men when they arrested them and raided a car without a warrant.

It was what Justice Anne Malloy described as a "high-risk takedown," in the reasons for a recent decision to exclude prime evidence at the men's trial. The reasons were delivered over the weekend. Officers alleged they found 3.5 kilograms of cocaine and a loaded gun. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Relief line seen as major priority for city

'We need it now'. Mayoral candidates see light at the end of the subway tunnel

It is becoming the campaign promise that unites them all.

Upon entering the mayoral race on Monday, John Tory echoed the words of another high-profile candidate, Councillor Karen Stintz, making clear his ambition to finally bring the downtown relief line to fruition.

"We need it now," Tory said as he filed his papers at city hall. "People are like sardines in the subway and on the buses and trying to get around the city."

The sudden spotlight on the relief line is a sign that momentum may finally be building for what Toronto's chief planner, Jennifer Keesmaat, describes as a "critical, missing infrastructure investment."

As Toronto and surrounding regions have grown, the case for a relief line — a U-shaped route bisecting the Bloor-Danforth line in the east and west, to give commuters another way to travel downtown — has only become more pronounced.

Each morning, about 20,000 riders board the Yonge line at Finch Station, heading south — a number that is expected grow to 51,000 by 2031.

Although signal upgrades will decrease the time between trains, from about three minutes to 90 seconds, it will only increase capacity by 25 per cent.

After a number of false starts, the relief line has now been identified as a priority both for the city and the region, and planning is underway — a joint effort by Metrolinx, the TTC and city staff.

The red line illustrates how a downtown relief line might look.
TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE GRAPHIC

At the behest of city council, Metrolinx last year advanced the proposed timing of the eastern portion of the relief line to the next 15 years. The major outstanding issue, however, is funding. Metrolinx has estimated the cost of the entire project, including the western portion, at $7.4 billion. The cost of the eastern segment is pegged at $3.2 billion, Keesmaat said.

"We're talking about a pretty substantial infrastructure investment," she said. "We're advancing on the planning side. The next conversation we're going to have to have is: 'Where is the money going to come from?'" TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Venezuela

Gov't blocks access to websites, protest app

The battle for Venezuela is being fought as vigorously online as in the streets, with Internet service cut off to a strife-torn university city and the government blocking selected websites and apps as anti-government demonstrations continue.

On Thursday night, the U.S. company Zello said that Venezuela's state-run telecom company, CANTV, had blocked access to the push-to-talk "walkie-talkie" app for smartphones and computers that has been a hugely popular organizing tool for protesters from Egypt to Ukraine.

Last week the government blocked images on Twitter after violence in Caracas claimed three lives amid protests. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Morocco

Hundreds storm Spanish border

Hundreds of sub-Saharan migrants armed with sticks and stones stormed the six-metre-high barbed wire border fence on Monday in a bid to enter Spain's northwest African enclave of Melilla from Morocco, with about 100 of them making it across, Spanish and Moroccan officials said.

Moroccan forces arrested 96 of the migrants, 14 of whom were hospitalized in the nearby city of Nador, according to a Moroccan Interior Ministry statement. It said 13 security force members were injured by the stone-throwing migrants.

Spain said 500 migrants were involved in the assault while Morocco put the figure at 300.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pope creates new council for financial reforms

Economics secretariat. Commission of inquiry leads to first overhaul of Vatican bureaucracy in a quarter century

Pope Francis on Monday announced the creation of an economics secretariat to control all economic, administrative, personnel and procurement functions of the Holy See.

Australian Cardinal George Pell, one of Francis' core eight cardinal advisers and a sharp critic of current Vatican governance, was named prefect of the new office. He reports to a new 15-member economy council made up of eight cardinals reflecting various parts of the world and seven lay experts.

Francis was elected pope a year ago on a mandate to reform the Vatican after documents stolen by Pope Benedict XVI's butler revealed the Holy See bureaucracy to be a dysfunctional, Machiavellian world of petty turf battles, corruption and political intrigue.

Pell, the outgoing archbishop of Sydney, was remarkably candid about the 2012 leaks scandal, saying it showed a failure of governance under Benedict.

Commission findings

The new structure is the result of a commission of inquiry appointed by Francis last summer to recommend ways to improve efficiency and transparency and reduce waste. Last week, with Francis' Group of Eight cardinal advisers present, the commission reported its findings.

- The Pope has yet to announce any decision on the findings of the other commission of inquiry, concerning the scandal-marred Vatican bank. That commission also presented its recommendations last week.

The new economics body covers the budgets, financial planning and administration of the Holy See — the central governing structure of the Catholic Church — and the 44-hectare Vatican City State in central Rome which includes the profit-making Vatican Museums and Vatican's post office.

An auditor will be empowered to conduct audits of any Vatican agency, at any time, the announcement said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pope Francis meets with Haiti's President Michel Joseph Martelly during a private audience at the Vatican, Monday. CLAUDIO PERI, POOL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Surprise move. Egypt cabinet resigns; could pave the way for el-Sissi

Egypt's interim cabinet resigned Monday in a surprise move that could pave the way for the nation's military chief, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, to announce his widely anticipated plans to run for president in the spring.

The resignation, announced by Prime Minister Hazem el-Beblawi in a televised statement, came amid a wave of labour strikes over the government's failure to fix the economy and rising popular anger nearly a year after Islamist President Mohammed Morsi was ousted by the military.

The Cabinet will remain in office in a caretaking capacity until a new one is formed. Its resignation fuelled speculation that el-Sissi will soon announce a presidential bid. The 59-year-old career infantry officer, who has been defence minister since Morsi named him to the cabinet post in August 2012, has already secured the support of Egypt's top military body, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, to seek the presidency.

Military and security officials said the British- and U.S.-trained el-Sissi has been working with a team of advisers on a program of action that he intends to announce when he declares his candidacy.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Changes

Thousands of el-Sissi posters are plastered on walls and hoisted on lampposts across much of the country.

- Songs praising him are played on radio and blare from coffee shops.
- He has been likened to a lion and a saviour who will bring strength and prosperity to Egypt.

Central African Republic

Muslims killed in rural massacre

Christian militiamen killed at least 70 people in the remote southwest of Central African Republic, at one point ordering a group of Muslims to lie on the ground and shooting them one by one, witnesses said Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congo

Militia attacks displace thousands

The UN says 400,000 people have been displaced in recent months by fighting involving local militia groups in Congo's mineral-rich southeast Katanga province. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defiant Ugandan president signs anti-gay bill into law

'Abhorrent.' White House press secretary Jay Carney said the country took a step backward and urged for the law's repeal

THANKS FOR SIGNING THE ANTI HOMOSEXUALITY BILL ANOTHER TERM U YOU
OBAMA LEAVE US ALONE: HOMOSEXUALS HAVE NO ROOM IN UGANDA

Ugandan pupils from different schools take part in an event organized by born-again Christians to celebrate the signing of a new anti-gay bill that sets harsh penalties for homosexual sex, at the Omega Healing Centre outside of Kampala, Uganda, on Monday. STEPHEN WANDERA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Uganda's president on Monday signed an anti-gay bill that punishes gay sex with up to life in prison, a measure likely to send Uganda's beleaguered gay community further underground as the police try to implement it amid fevered anti-gay sentiment across the country.

Uganda President Yoweri Museveni said the bill, which goes into effect immediately, was needed because the West is promoting homosexuality in Africa.

Museveni may have defied Western pressure to shelve the bill, four years and many versions after it was introduced, but his move — likely to galvanize support ahead of presidential elections — pleased many Ugandans, who repeatedly urged him to sign the legislation.

Nigeria's president similarly signed an anti-gay bill into law just over a month ago, sparking increased violence against gays who already were persecuted in mob attacks.

Some watchdog groups warn a similar backlash of violence may occur in Uganda.

"Experience from other jurisdictions with similarly draconian laws, such as Nigeria or Russia, indicates that their implementation is often followed by a surge in violence against individuals thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender," the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission said in a statement Monday.

"The Ugandan government has not indicated any plans to counter such violence or to investigate potential allegations of abuse."

In Washington, White House press secretary Jay Carney called the law "abhorrent," urged its repeal and said the White House is reviewing its relationship with Uganda.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay warned that the law would institutionalize discrimination and could encourage harassment and violence against gays.

At least six people have already been arrested over alleged homosexual offences and more than a dozen have fled Uganda since lawmakers passed the bill in December, according to a prominent Ugandan gay activist, Pepe Julian Onziema.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

School of ska, rocksteady, reggae brings Jamaican sounds to world

Alpha Boys' School. Facility has long been the cradle of Jamaica's music culture — and a beacon of hope for at-risk youngsters

Barefoot and dressed in donated clothes, 12-year-old Renaldo Brown methodically plays scales on a flute at a Jamaican vocational school renowned for nurturing many of this music-steeped island's top instrumentalists.

The serious boy from the gritty Jamaican city of Spanish Town is among two dozen boys from impoverished backgrounds who are discovering a new world through music after being placed by family courts at Alpha Boys' School in Kingston. Some are orphans, while others are there because of neglect, abuse or because their parents can't control them.

Decade after decade, Alpha alumni have emerged from the residential facility that has been operated by Catholic nuns since the late 19th century, to bring the sounds of Jamaican ska, rocksteady and reggae to the world.

But despite its outsized role in developing Jamaica's world-famous music, the musical hothouse in Kingston is increasingly squeezed between rising costs and shrinking state support, barely scraping by on the $60 US weekly the government provides per student. The budget crunch has become so bad administrators say they will be forced to eliminate the program's residential side.

In response, the school is building up its own revenue-generating businesses, including a recently launched Alpha Wear clothing line and an Internet radio station that draws 60,000 people monthly by broadcasting tunes featuring alumni. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alumni

Past students who transcended rough starts in life to become top musicians include the four founding members of the influential band The Skatalites, the late free-form jazz pioneer Joe Harriott, and dancehall deejay Yellowman.

Eleven-year-old Tyrone Muirhead, on the trumpet, practices with the Alpha Boys' School band in Kingston, Jamaica. The school has been a cornerstone of Jamaica's prolific musical culture for over a century. DAVID MCFADDEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alpha Boys' School

Ex-students keep the legacy going

At the Alpha Boys' School, students between eight and 18 are taught self-discipline and pride while learning to read music and understand harmony and composition, if they don't focus on the school's more traditional trades like woodworking and tailoring.

"You'll find old students from Alpha keeping the legacy going just about everywhere," said Winston "Sparrow" Martin, an alumnus.

Classical, jazz and folk music were long part of the curricula. But when the Caribbean island got wind of American rhythm and blues in the 1950s, Alpha students with trumpets, trombones and other instruments transformed that music to create upbeat-accented ska, which later evolved into rocksteady and reggae. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pentagon chief unveils plans to downsize army

Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel is recommending shrinking the U.S. Army to its smallest size in decades in the 2015 budget. SUSAN WALSH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Monday proposed shrinking the U.S. Army to its smallest size in 74 years, closing military bases and making other military-wide savings as part of a broad reshaping after more than a decade of war.

Hagel outlined his vision in a speech at the Pentagon, a week before President Barack Obama is to submit his 2015 budget plan to Congress.

Hagel said that U.S. forces must adjust to the reality of smaller budgets, even as he asserted that the United States faces a more volatile, more unpredictable world that requires a more nimble military.

Under the Hagel plan, which Congress could change, the active-duty Army would shrink from its current 522,000 soldiers to between 440,000 and 450,000. That would make it the smallest since just before the U.S. entered World War II.

Hagel said Obama's budget proposal will include a government-wide "Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative" that would provide the Pentagon with $26 billion US on top of the $496 billion US it is due to receive in 2015 under terms of the budget deal passed by the Congress two months ago.

Among the bolder moves in Hagel's proposal is the elimination of the Air Force's fleet of A-10 aircraft as well as its venerable U-2 spy planes, as well as reductions in the size of the Army National Guard. Those moves are expected to draw some opposition in Congress.

Hagel said the administration will propose a new round of domestic military base closings in 2017, while noting that Congress has rejected such requests in recent years.

The last time the active-duty army was below 500,000 was in 2005, when it stood at 492,000. Its post-World War II low was 480,000 in 2001, according to historical tables. In 1940 the army had 267,000 active-duty members, and it surged to 1.46 million the following year as the U.S. approached entry into World War II. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Grenade attack in Thailand kills two young children

Political unrest. 'I'm asking ... to let my children be the last case (of violence) on Thai soil,' pleads grieving father

The father grimaced and wept as he struggled to contain his grief at the death of his two children in a grenade attack during a weekend trip to a mall in downtown Bangkok, the latest casualties in Thailand's months of political crisis.

"I'm asking and pleading to every side to let my children be the last case (of violence) on Thai soil," Tayakorn Yos-ubon, 33, said, his voice shaking, before retrieving their bodies from the morgue Monday.

Korawit, 4, and his sister Patcharakorn, 6, were not part of the anti-government demonstrations. They had piled into a three-wheeled tuk-tuk taxi after eating at a KFC with their cousin and an aunt when the attack occurred Sunday near a busy intersection occupied by the protesters.

The siblings, along with a five-year-old girl who died Saturday in another attack on a rally site in the eastern province of Trat, are the first children to be killed in the country's recent political unrest, which has claimed at least 20 lives and injured more than 700 since November. Police have not arrested any suspects in the weekend attacks.

The Thai public has recoiled in shock over the children's deaths, and yet there seems to be no sign that either side in the impasse is softening its position. City residents have braced for more violence.

The nine-year-old boy cousin suffered brain and lung damage and is in intensive care. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tayakorn Yos-ubon, the father of two children killed in Sunday's grenade attack on an anti-government protest site, is embraced by his family as he breaks down during a ceremony at a hospital where he collected their bodies on Monday in Bangkok, Thailand. WASON WANICHAKORN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. states tackle backlog of untested rape kits

Possibly hundreds of thousands of rape kits remain untested across the U.S., and a number of states are proposing legislation to address backlogs that are years or decades long.

In Memphis, Tenn., alone, more than 12,000 rape kits going back to the 1980s remain untested, according to the New York-based Rape Kit Action Project, which has been tracking the backlogs nationwide. In Texas, about 16,000 untested kits are collecting dust in police evidence rooms.

Tennessee is among at least 17 states with proposals that range from requiring law enforcement agencies to inventory their rape kits to analyzing them in a certain amount of time. Three states — Colorado, Illinois and Texas — have passed laws that mandate a statewide accounting of untested rape kits.

Rape Project spokeswoman Natasha Alexenko estimates there are about 400,000 untested kits nationwide.

"Until we enact this kind of legislation where we're counting them, we really have no idea," said Alexenko, a rape victim whose rape kit was finally tested after nearly 10 years. Her attacker was arrested after a match was found.

Last year, Congress officially recognized the national problem in passing the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Registry Act, or SAFER, which seeks to provide data on the number of unsolved rape cases awaiting testing and establish better standards for the tracking, storage and use of DNA evidence in sexual assault cases.

The federal government is also providing funding to help cover the costs for testing the kits, which usually contain swabs, evidence envelopes and information sheets detailing the examination. They cost at least $500 to test. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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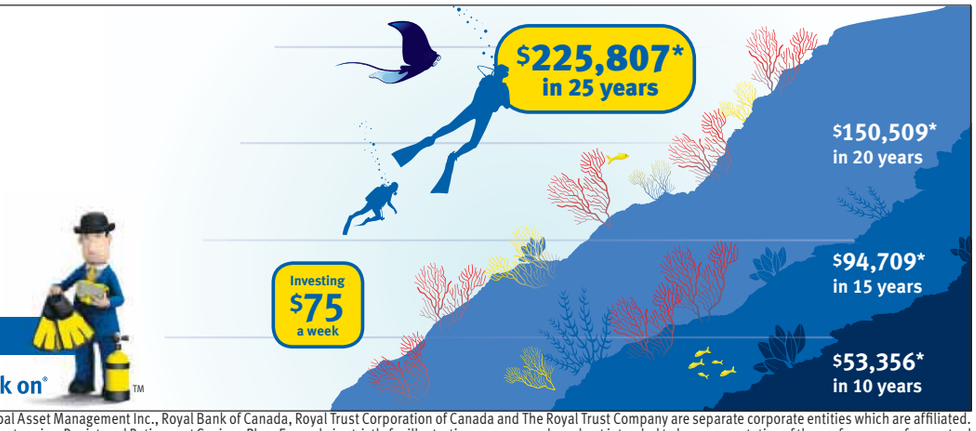

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Vince Li THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Manitoba Greyhound bus killer deserves more freedom: Doctor

A doctor is suggesting that a man who beheaded a passenger on a Manitoba Greyhound bus should get more freedom.

Vince Li's psychiatrist is asking the Criminal Code Review Board to let Li have unescorted day trips to Selkirk, Man.

Dr. Stephen Kremer says Li should also be moved out of a locked ward and onto an unlocked ward at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

Li has been at the mental hospital since he was found not criminally responsible for the killing of Tim McLean in 2008.

The review board holds annual hearings to review restrictions on Li, who was initially kept inside a locked wing 24 hours a day. Kremer told the hearing Li has never been violent in the hospital, no longer suffers hallucinations or delusions and has made "excellent" progress. Kremer said the ultimate goal is to have Li reintegrated into society — something McLean's mother, Carol DeDelley, has opposed.

DeDelley has said Li should be kept in custody for the rest of his life because there is no guarantee he will take his medication. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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People lay flowers and candles at one of the barricades heading to Independence Square, in

Warrant is Ukrainian

Kyiv. Derided by Russia as gun-toting thugs, new leaders move swiftly to open dialogue with West

With Viktor Yanukovych on the run, Ukraine's interim government drew up a warrant Monday for the fugitive president's arrest in the killing of anti-government protesters last week, while Russia issued its strongest condemnation yet of the new leaders in Kyiv, deriding them as "Kalashnikov-toting people in black masks."

Parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchinov, the interim president, moved quickly to open a dialogue with the West, saying at a meeting with EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton that the course toward closer integration with Europe and financial assistance from the EU were "key factors of stable and democratic development of Ukraine."

In a statement released by his office, Turchinov said Ukraine and the EU should

Ukraine no 'laughing matter'

Trudeau slammed for hockey quip

The Conservatives took aim at Justin Trudeau on Monday for his tongue-in-cheek weekend remarks linking the upheaval in Ukraine to Russia's Olympic hockey humiliation.

"So Justin Trudeau … thinks the deadly crisis in Ukraine is a laughing matter," Employment Minister Jason Kenney tweeted.

Industry Minister James Moore also took to Twitter to draw attention to Trudeau's joke. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kyiv, Ukraine, on Monday. EFREM LUKATSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

issued for president

immediately revisit the closer ties that Yanukovych abandoned in November in favour of a $15-billion bailout loan from Russia that set off a wave of protests. Within weeks, the protests expanded to include outrage over corruption and human rights abuses, leading to calls for Yanukovych's resignation.

Yanukovych, who fled Kyiv on Saturday after the opposition took over government buildings, has reportedly gone to the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, a pro-Russia area.

Calls are mounting to put Yanukovych on trial after a tumultuous presidency in which he amassed powers, enriched his allies and family, and cracked down on protesters.

Acting Interior Minister Arsen Avakhov said on his official Facebook page that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Yanukovych and several other officials for the "mass killing of civilians."

Yanukovych's last public appearance was in a televised interview Saturday from Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, a base of his support, where he insisted he was still president and would not leave the country.

He then tried to fly out of Donetsk but was stopped and went to Crimea on Sunday, Avakhov said.

There, Yanukovych freed his official security detail from its duties and drove to an unknown location, turning off all forms of communication, Avakhov said.

"Yanukovych has disappeared," he added.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada, U.S. react

- White House spokesman Jay Carney says the U.S. is prepared to help Ukraine regain economic stability by providing support.
- The Harper government is leaving the threat of sanctions against Russia on the table if it interferes in the events in Ukraine.

First Nations youth

Report calls for five-year plan

A new report by Ontario's advocate for children and youth is calling for a five-year plan to address the needs and difficulties facing aboriginal young people.

It sets a 60-day timeline for governments of all levels to state their support for the five-year plan and to create a formal body to put the plan into action.

The report also urges governments of all levels to make northern remote and fly-in First Nations communities safer and healthier.

The report, titled Feathers of Hope, came out of meetings last year involving more than 160 aboriginal youth from 64 communities.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Election Act changes

NDP, Liberals push for hearings

The NDP is accusing the governing Conservatives of trying to rig Canada's election rules while clouding criticism of the changes as just another Ottawa battle.

The NDP, backed by the Liberals, wants hearings held across the country on proposed changes to the Elections Act.

NDP deputy leader David Christopherson has introduced a motion that would instruct the Conservative-dominated committee to complete the hearings by May 1.

Christopherson says the government is resisting the idea because it wants to make the fight over election rules just another "battle in the bubble" that Canadians can easily tune out.

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Breakfast smackdown: McMuffin vs. Waffle Taco

Only in America.
Taco Bell thinking outside the bun with morning menu as it takes on McD's in U.S.

Egg McMuffin, meet the Waffle Taco.

Taco Bell is readying for the launch of its national breakfast menu in the U.S. on March 27, with items such as the A.M. Crunchwrap designed to appeal to its fan base of younger men. And the chain says breakfast will be available until 11 a.m., a half hour longer than McDonald's offers its Egg McMuffins.

"We can turn the breakfast conversation into a two-horse race," Taco Bell president Brian Niccol said in an interview, noting that Taco Bell intends to be a "strong number two" after McDonald's in America.

McDonald's has long been the fast-food leader in Americans' mornings, with its popular Sausage Biscuits, Hotcakes and other items pulling in roughly 20 per cent of the company's U.S. sales. But the chain has been facing stiffer competition in recent years, with players such as Starbucks and Subway rolling out breakfast sandwiches as well.

It's not clear how Taco Bell's entry into breakfasts will alter the fast-food landscape. Last year, an executive with Taco Bell's parent company Yum Brands said that breakfast accounted for about four per cent of sales in locations where it was tested. But that was before the chain put its full marketing might behind the menu, he noted.

McDonald's, which has more than 14,000 U.S. locations, has also said it plans to step up its marketing of breakfast this year as it faces intensifying competition. The president of McDonald's USA, Jeff Stratton, also told The Associated Press that the chain is in the early stages of looking at whether it can extend its breakfast hours.

Stratton noted that cutting off breakfast on the weekends at 10:30 a.m. "doesn't go very well" with people in their 20s and 30s in particular. Still, figuring out how to serve both breakfast and lunch poses an operational challenge given the limited kitchen space in restaurants.

In the meantime, Kevin Newell, U.S. brand and strategy officer for McDonald's, seemed unfazed in an interview late last week by Taco Bell's plans to start serving breakfast.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Voice service coming

Hey, what's up? Talk with pals via WhatsApp soon

WhatsApp, the popular messaging service for smartphones acquired by Facebook, will soon be offering a voice service.

CEO Jan Koum said the voice service will be deployed for Android and iPhones this spring.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

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White elephants or lasting investments?

As the sun sets on the Sochi 2014 Winter Games in Russia, the future is uncertain. For the host cities, the real challenge begins with the end of the Olympics. Here's a look at what some past Summer and Winter Games sites around the world look like post-Olympics.

TEXT AND PHOTOS: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sarajevo: Gone downhill

Wartime destruction and negligence have turned most of Sarajevo's 1984 Winter Olympic venues into painful reminders of the city's golden times.

Vancouver: On track, so far

All Games venues from the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver remain in use, with local authorities funding a $110-million trust to make sure that they don't fall into disrepair.

Atlanta: Home of the Braves

After the 1996 games, the Olympic Stadium in Atlanta was converted into Turner Field, the baseball stadium that's been home to the Atlanta Braves for the past several years.

Nagano: One size doesn't fit all

In Nagano, Japan, a city with a population of just 387,000, five large structures were built for the 1998 Winter Games. They are in use, but many say the venues are too big and costly to maintain for the size of the town.

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Coffee wars brewing from coast-to-coast

Joe drama. The once seemingly indomitable Tim Hortons is facing a big push from rivals McDonald's, Starbucks

MELISSA DUNNE
melissa.dunne@metronews.ca

On the ice, Tim Horton was known to dole out "Horton hugs," squeezing his rivals until they couldn't breathe.

Now, 50 years after Horton opened his first coffee shop, Tim Hortons Inc. execs will need to channel its founder's defensive style as it prepares to hit back in an increasingly crowded market.

Although Tim Hortons still dominates the Canadian coffee market, holding just over 75 per cent of it with about 3,500 outlets in Canada, the company recently missed analysts' profit expectations for 2013. On Tuesday, Tim's will unveil its plan to squeeze key players like McDonald's McCafé and Starbucks, which have dropped the gloves in the fight for java supremacy.

When Tim's opened its first store in Hamilton in May 1964, it had the arena to itself, said Douglas Hunter, who has written books on both Horton and Hortons.

"Tim's could expand easily, move right next to McDonald's and it didn't matter, they were selling different products."

It matters now.

McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Ltd. is aggressively going after longtime Tim's fans.

In 2007, the burger giant jolted its competitors by winning a Consumer Reports taste test. When the Golden Arches launched McCafé in Canada in 2009, it gave away its coffee for free. McD's aggressive game has reaped rewards: it has doubled its market share here to about 10 per cent in under five years.

This week customers can get a free coffee in a sleek brown-and-white cup at one of McDonald's almost 1,500 outposts in Canada. But free java will not sway Yasha Grey, a 25-year-old master's student in St. Catharines, Ont., who usually orders a single-single (one cream, one sugar), coming in a Tim's iconic red-and-yellow Roll Up the Rim to Win cup these days.

"It may sound cheesy, but I really like that Tim Hortons is Canadian," Grey said. "I like its homey, country feel."

Cheesy or not, serving up a side of Canadiana works.

The power of patriotism is now percolating over at Starbucks Canada. The world java juggernaut first came to Canada in 1987 with a single outlet in Vancouver. It now has more than 1,000 outlets here and will open about 100 more this year. Its baristas now pour a Canada-only brew named True North into minimalist green-and-white cups. And, as we enter maple-syrup season, Starbucks is unveiling the Maple Macchiato next week.

While Timothy's Coffees of the World Inc. and The Second Cup Ltd. opened their doors in Canada 12 years before Starbucks, they have not been able to maintain their head start.

Timothy's grew from one store in London to about 139 in 2009. It is down to about 100 stores after its wholesale and retail businesses were spun off and sold to U.S. companies.

Second Cup started as a kiosk in a Toronto mall and now has about 350 cafés. It dropped its CEO late last year after it posted a loss of $8.5 million. But the chain is mounting a comeback under Alix Box, who once worked as an executive at Starbucks and officially took the reins Monday.

Unlike its smaller Canadian compatriots, Tim's has been able to stay ahead of international competitors so far.

But to some, the chain is starting to taste stale and needs to brew up a fresh pot of business fast.

"We are moving into a different era. The baby boomers Tim's has relied on are getting older," said Douglas Stephens, a leading retail analyst based in Toronto.

In a bid to attract baby boomers' kids and grandkids, all coffee sellers must hatch bold strategies.

We love coffee, with a whopping 65 per cent of us drinking it daily, according to a study by the Coffee Association of Canada, but changing demographics mean changing tastes.

Millennials demand that products be healthy and ethically sourced. Oh, and also cheap. And many new Canadians don't even drink coffee, opting for tea instead, noted Stephens.

Like the real Horton, Tim Hortons' top brass will have to mount a strong defence if the chain is to remain the top player in the good ol' coffee game.

By the numbers

$898M

Tim Hortons reported it had earned $898.5 million in revenue during the fourth quarter, up 10.7 per cent from a year earlier, but a smaller profit than analysts were expecting.

At-home

The coffee pot has gone to pod

Pots are out, pods are in.

"In the at-home category, single-serve machines have been a category disruptive phenomenon," said Sandy McAlpine, head of the Coffee Association of Canada.

Keurig, Tassimo and Nespresso currently dominate the market, said McAlpine.

The focus of Tim Hortons, McDonald's and Starbucks is takeout brew, but the at-home market can't be ignored.

Just over half of Canadians make their cuppa at home daily, while only 24 per cent buy takeout every day, noted McAlpine.

In response, Tim's announced last week it will expand its Keurig K-discs and Tassimo T-discs to grocery-store shelves later this year. McD's, under its McCafé brand, has teamed up with Kraft and will test selling pods in U.S. grocery stores soon. Starbucks opted to launch its own machine and pods, called Verismo, in its Canadian stores in late 2012.

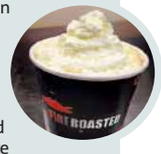
Pods have certainly perked up the home market, and the takeout coffee champs have all set their sights on adding some at-home fans to their base.

Hipster havens

Here are some top independent coffee shops across Canada luring hipsters away from Starbucks, Tim Hortons and McDonald's.

- **Vancouver.** JJ Bean: Established in 1996; 15 locations, as of March; its specialties are the cappuccino and vegan-friendly Very Berry Muffin.
- **Calgary.** Caffè Artigiano: Established in 2000; 12 locations in Western Canada; its specialty is the cappuccino (espresso, milk and foam).

- **Edmonton.** Leva: Established in 2003; one location; its specialties are the cappuccino and croissants.
- **Regina.** Atlantis Coffee: Established in 2000; one location; its specialties are the cappuccino and Prairie Cherry Scone.
- **Winnipeg.** Parlour Coffee: Established in 2011; one location; its specialties are wet-foam cappuccinos (flat white) and pour-over coffees.
- **Saskatoon.** Collective Coffee: Established in 2011; its specialties are artisan espresso and single-origin coffee.
- **London.** The Fire Roasted Coffee Co.: Established in 2013; two locations; its specialty is El Toro Bravo, an espresso and hot chocolate latte made with real chocolate.



- **Toronto.** Sam James Coffee Bar: Established in 2009; three locations; its specialty is the cappuccino.

- **Ottawa.** Bridgehead: Established in 2000; 15 locations; its specialties are the cappuccino and Morning Bun.
- **Halifax.** Two If By Sea Café: Established in 2009; two locations; its specialties are chocolate croissants and drip coffee.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO FALL

SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

My generation grew up in an age of motivational posters and boom-time optimism. My parents, for better or worse, always tried to nurture my specialness and asserted that I could achieve absolutely anything I set my mind to. But for the large majority of us that simply isn't true and these high expectations can lead to a great deal of disappointment.

And it's not just overly entitled millennials who are faced with the challenges of overcoming rejection. Every day romances end, job applications are tossed in the recycling bin and hopeful young athletes are cut from the team.

Some forms of rejection are subtle and relatively inconsequential; you'll never really know if someone swipes to the left on your Tinder profile or one of your countless Twitter connections decides to unfollow you. But it's hard not to feel crushed when you're passed over for a promotion or a landlord picks someone else for that perfect apartment.

In fact, the sting of being snubbed actually hurts in much the same way as physical distress. In a 2011 study at the University of Michigan, researchers used a functional MRI machine to measure our brain's reaction to social rejection compared to simulated bodily pain. The researchers found that asking participants to recall their feelings about a bad breakup activated the same region of the brain that processes physical discomfort.

If hurt feelings can actually translate into the ache of a broken bone then logic would suggest that popping a couple of pain killers might help relieve the anguish of being rebuffed (at least temporarily). However, rather than doubling down on painkillers, we're probably better off reconditioning ourselves to process our emotions in a more positive and constructive way.

It's easy to dwell on moments of rejection and allow those feelings of inadequacy to chip away at your self-esteem. But attacking yourself when you're already down is like rubbing lemon juice into a paper cut. Concentrating on why you're not good enough for your dream job or blaming yourself for a failed relationship makes it difficult to stabilize your emotions and get past the pain. If we instead focus on reconstructing these negative experiences as opportunities for personal growth, we're more likely to recover faster and move forward.

It's important to remember that some of the most successful people in the world fail the greatest amount, not because they're hopeless but because they allow themselves to be vulnerable and go after possibilities even though they've failed in the past.

If you try to avoid rejection at all costs in order to protect your fragile ego, you'll avoid getting hurt by potentially bad experiences but you'll also miss out on plenty of positive ones too. Getting out of your comfort zone and risking failure is a success in itself because even if you're doing something wrong, at least you're doing something.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays

ZOOM

They've entered the matrix

COURTESY NUMEN/FOR USE

Geometric cube is artsy jungle gym

These climbers are learning the ropes of how to scale a 3D grid. Designed by Croatian-Austrian collective Numen/For Use, String Prototype is an inflatable jungle gym-meets-interactive art site that contains a network of interlocking cables, allowing intrepid visitors to explore inside a large-scale white cube. **METRO**

The cube stands at eight metres high and six metres wide.
COURTESY NUMEN/FOR USE

Ropes tight enough to hold people

When the cube deflates, the ropes become loose, allowing the installation to decompress. When inflated, the ropes tighten themselves into a grid strong enough to support the weight of children and adults alike. **METRO**

Clickbait

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro Online

With the advent of Siri for iPhone and Google Now for Android, we were empowered to talk to our mobile phones. Almost immediately, they began to talk back. Both Apple and Google have loaded their voice search programs with fun, often hilarious Easter eggs. To check some of them out, ask your phone a few of these questions.

ISTOCKIMAGES

Android:

"Make me a sandwich."
"Beam me up, Scotty."
"Who are you?"
"When am I?"
"What does the fox say?"

iPhone:

"Will you marry me?"
"Mirror mirror on the wall who's the fairest of them all?"
"Siri, can you open the pod bay doors?"

Twitter

@metropicks asked: A court orders TekSavvy to name downloaders. What would you do if you were asked to pay piracy damages?

@thebellguy: Request refunds for all the terrible movies I've paid for first

@Canucklehead_ca: Ye lice-infested swine! I only be downloading a single movie: "Booty and the Beast". To ERR is human ... to ARR is pirate!

@UnfunnyTweeter: I'd tell them they could have it all and then draw them a hidden treasure map. Yaarrrr.

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

Comments

RE: Students Embrace Our Golden Moment, Watch Canadian Women Beat U.S. In Olympic Hockey, published Feb. 20

No wonder students are ill prepared for the real world in this day. Instead of watching TV at school they should be learning math.
Bucket of Chicken posted to metronews.ca

This is part of our culture, students should be able to celebrate Canada's achievements. I'm proud that I can say I was able to see first hand this part of history. Sincerely, Caledonia Student
P.S. I had math in the morning.
Bucket_of_Awesome posted to metronews.ca

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SCENE 2

DVD review

Gravity

Director. Alfonso Cuarón

Stars. Sandra Bullock, George Clooney

Not since 2001: A Space Odyssey has a film so vividly and realistically transmitted the feeling of being lost in space. Alfonso Cuarón's 3D film captures the deepest blues of Earth and the midnight hues of space, powerfully affecting the senses. High above the blue planet, slowly revealed in widescreen splendor by Emmanuel Lubezki's intoxicating camerawork, two spacewalking shuttle astronauts defy a vacuum and also expectations — and then calamity strikes. A leading contender for best picture at the March 2 Academy Awards, the film also works on a purely emotional level. Sandra Bullock and George Clooney convincingly depict the plight of space travellers facing dwindling oxygen and rescue prospects. Gravity isn't sci-fi. It's a sky high.

PETER HOWELL

Hollywood

Ghostbusters star Harold Ramis dies

Comedy actor, director and writer Harold Ramis, best known for his roles in movies such as Ghostbusters and Stripes, has died at his suburban Chicago home after a four-year battle with an autoimmune disease, his talent agency said. Ramis, 69, died early Monday morning of complications from vasculitis.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dust off your bikes and fight for your vegan rights

Portlandia is back. The quirky sketch comedy kicks off its fourth season with a Steve Buscemi bit on the plight of celery

PAT HEALY
Metro World News in Boston

Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein are set to bring you another season of Portlandia. AUGUSTA QUIRK/IFC

Over the past three seasons of Portlandia, Fred Armisen, Carrie Brownstein and director Jonathan Krisel have perfected a revolutionary recipe that marries music and comedy with utter absurdity. The fourth season, which premieres next week, furthers their cause, especially with a sketch called The Celery Incident, which has already gone live online.

In the sketch, Steve Buscemi plays a sales representative for celery, desperately trying to compete against other vegetable salesmen who have had recent fantastical, unlikely success with veggies like kale and Brussels sprouts.

"I think Celery embodies — even though it's more genre-specific than some of our other sketches — I think it really embodies the traits of the show that I think are the most successful," says Brownstein, "which is taking a relatable, sometimes timely premise and veering into the absurd, and then hopefully veering even more into surreality, and then somewhere at the heart of this, having some relatable characters that are suffering through genuine and authentic relationship issues."

Just because they use familiar ingredients for their recipe doesn't mean the show is formulaic. Yes, you will see a lot of the characters you've seen in the previous three seasons, but in preposterous situations: Candace and Toni, the owners of Women and Women First bookstore, host a car wash fundraiser; Lance and Nina — Brownstein and Armisen's gender-swapping couple — find themselves in conflict with Jeff Goldblum's mattress salesman over a certain claim he has made that casts everything Lance stands for into doubt.

"We'll have pictures of the characters on a bulletin board and we'll have an idea for something," says Armisen, "and then we kind of shift the idea to each character, like, 'I wonder if they would be good for this?' And then eventually it will just resonate right away, and you'll know it's perfect for a set of characters."

Watch it

- Portlandia season 4 airs on Superchannel starting March 3; see superchannel.ca for air times. Seasons 1 and 2 are available on Netflix.

With such a winning formula, it's understandable that the Portlandia peeps would be protective of what they've created.

"We have worked for four seasons to make this world that feels a little bit specific and strange and hyper-real," says Brownstein. "So we try to keep that world magic and special, but of course in the meantime we have had people from SNL and friends on. There's definitely an open-door policy, as long as it feels germane and doesn't feel conspicuous to have things cross over."

We'd be remiss not asking Armisen if he thought there would be any crossover with his new role as bandleader for Late Night with Seth Meyers, but when it comes to inheriting Questlove's seat, he suddenly turns even more protective.

"I don't want to talk about it," he says, shifting the tone of the conversation into uncomfortable territory. "That's something for my friend Seth and it's fun and I don't want to talk about it because this is about Portlandia and Carrie is on the other line."

He will allow, however, that he's going to be able to take time off to work on Portlandia. "It will be perfect," he says, with a little less attitude. "My focus is Portlandia. That's what I do."

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Sam Worthington ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Avatar star Worthington punched photographer who 'kicked' his girlfriend

Avatar star Sam Worthington was arrested in New York over the weekend for allegedly punching a photographer during an altercation outside a Greenwich Village bar, according to Radar Online. Law enforcement sources say the Australian actor was coming to the aid of girlfriend Lara Bingle. "The photographer kicked Lara and then Worthington punched him, causing the photographer to have lacerations to his nose," an NYPD spokesperson says. "He has been charged with assault. He punched the photographer." That photographer, by the way, was also arrested on charges of assault, reckless endangerment and harassment.

Charlie's chuffed with new fiancée ... just don't say porn star

Charlie Sheen is excited about starting a life with his new fiancée, Brett Rossi, but he'd be a lot happier if the press would stop calling her a porn star. "It's absolutely making Charlie crazy that the media keeps referring to Brett as a porn star, because she no longer is doing that. She recently graduated from nursing school," a source tells Radar Online. "Furthermore, her stage name is Brett Rossi, her legal name is Scottine Ross. He wants people to refer to her as Scotti."

Charlie Sheen

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Baldwin states his case and writes off the fame game

MELINDA TAUB
Metro World News

Here is a partial list of things and people Alec Baldwin slammed in New York Magazine on Monday: the paparazzi, homophobes, people who think Alec Baldwin is a homophobe, CSI, a man in Hawaii who answers the phone rudely, Shia LaBeouf, Rachel Maddow, Broadway, New York, America, the world, 2013.

Baldwin has penned a lengthy piece that is purportedly his resignation from public life, but the bulk of it is essentially a rebuttal to everything you've read or heard about him in the past year. Everything, from his failed attempt to costar with Shia LaBeouf on Broadway to his cancelled MSNBC show to allegations that he'd used a gay slur, is addressed and found to be the fault of a vicious paparazzi culture whose main purpose is to make Alec Baldwin look bad.

Baldwin keeps returning to one episode: An incident in 2013 when a photographer tried to take a picture of Baldwin and his baby daughter, and the actor chased him down the street cussing him out. According to TMZ, Baldwin called him a "faggot." Baldwin insists that's not true, but he blames the fact that he's been falsely labelled a homophobe for everything from the cancellation of his MSNBC show (well, he also blames Rachel Maddow for that) to the fact that he probably can't run for mayor of New York now. I would have slightly more sympathy for Baldwin's plight if he hadn't used the word "tranny" in the article. Still, the piece is amusing for exactly the thing Baldwin claims to deplore: celebrity gossip. Shia LaBeouf screamed at him for not knowing his lines! Rachel Maddow viewed him as "equivalent to Mel Gibson!" Juicy, Alec. Tell us more.

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What does your achoo say about you?

Is it a cold? Is it allergies? It all depends on how long you've been suffering. ISTOCK

Winter blahs. Spring isn't quite here yet and neither is allergy season but that cold might not be a cold after all

MAJA LUNDAGER PEDERSEN
Metro News in New York City

It's been 14 days and that cold you caught is still hanging on. What do you do? Probably nothing. It's just a cold, right? Actually, you might have an allergy. No, allergies aren't just a spring thing.

"What I tell [patients] is, if it lasts for more than nine days, it's not a cold. It's probably either a sinus infection or an allergy," says Dr. Joan Lehach, an integrative medicine physician specializing in allergy, asthma and clinical immunology at Montefiore Medical Center in New York.

Lehach knows it can be hard to distinguish a cold from allergies. "The things that they have in common are you get congestion, you can get a cough, you can get postnasal drip, you can get a headache. You just feel tired and not well."

But there are other signs that indicate your bug may be an environmental issue, rather than a bacterial one. Typically, you are not going to get a fever with an allergy. Your mucus can be clearer in colour — with colds, sometimes it turns green or yellow. You don't get body aches with an allergy, typically, whereas with a cold you might.

Winter allergies do exist, and if you get sneezy during the spring and summer, chances are you'll be affected in colder months too. Common culprits? "Indoor things like dust mites and mold," Lehach says.

Allergies are not just annoying — they can also lead to sinus infections, which are also similar to colds. Allergies set you up for getting actual colds and viruses because your immune system is stressed.

By paying attention to your nasal health, Lehach says you can reduce your risk of catching a wintertime bug. Follow her advice: "The most important thing you can do — and this applies to colds, flus and allergies — is wash your hands and face.

"Also, if the air is too dry, it sets you up for a dry mucosa with cracks in your nose, so when you are exposed to viruses you are more likely to get infected because you have these microscopic cracks. And if it's too moist you are going to grow the mold and the dust mites and the indoor allergens [that] make your symptoms worse as well.

"Try to keep the humidity in your house around 50 per cent. For five or six bucks you can get this little gadget that will tell you the humidity in your house, and then you can either get a humidifier or a dehumidifier, or do something as simple as putting a pot on the radiator and that moistens the air."

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Kris Abel
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BEST HEALTH MINUTE
Bonnie Munday
Editor-in-chief
Best Health Magazine

From fitness wristbands to Google Glass, it's clear we are living in generation gadget. So, it's fitting that in the beauty aisles, there are now at-home devices for virtually every skin concern.

In the latest issue of Best Health, Canada's healthy lifestyle magazine for women, we've included an article by writer Wing Sze Tang about the latest skin care gizmos.

Some are technologically similar to what's available at the dermatologist's office or the spa, but do the DIY versions work? Likely not as well as doctor's office equipment. But they can be a good complement, or at the very least, worth a try. They are approved by Health Canada as safe. Here are a few:

The Anti-Ager
Tria Beauty Age Defying Laser ($495 at Sephora). This is a handheld non-ablative fractional laser, meaning that it doesn't vaporize a whole layer of tissue. The device uses targeted beams of light to stimulate the natural cell renewal cycle in order to generate collagen. This kick-starts the skin's self-repair process, resulting in fresh, new cells, with diminished fine lines and wrinkles, and less-noticeable age spots. The device mimics office-based non-ablative fractional technology, and can improve overall skin appearance and diminish pigmentation.

Bring the spa home with some high-tech beauty gadgets. ISTOCK

The Acne Buster
Tanda Zap Power ($79 at Hudson's Bay). Designed as a targeted spot treatment, this gadget features antibacterial blue LED light and pore-opening sonic vibration and gentle warming to help tame breakouts. It can be used by teens and adults with any skin type or tone. Blue light therapy reduces mild inflammatory acne. The company claims it can zap 85 per cent of acne-causing bacteria after six minutes, helping to reduce a breakout within 24 hours.

The Pore Detoxer
Clarisonic Deep Pore Decongesting Solution ($200). By oscillating at high frequency, this cleansing tool loosens the sticky debris plugging your pores. The inner rings on the brush head oscillate in counter-rotation to flex and relax skin surrounding pores and purge congested skin, shaking the dead cells off the skin. After using it for two weeks, you should notice smaller-looking pores and smoother skin texture. Its exfoliating effect is mild, so keep other exfoliating products as part of your routine.

For more examples of skin-care devices you can use at home, pick up the March/April issue of Best Health. BEST HEALTH IS ON NEWSSTANDS, OR YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE AT BESTHEALTHMAG.CA. WE ALSO HAVE AN AWARD-WINNING IPAD EDITION.

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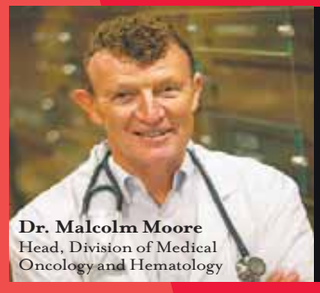

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THE BIG TICKET

Survive (and thrive) the rest of winter

Although it's finally light outside past 5 p.m., winter's short days can still make us feel lethargic and a little depressed. The long hours spent indoors hibernating on the couch can also have a major impact on our overall wellbeing.

To avoid the effects of old man winter, fight your hibernating instincts by embracing the season, while taking the necessary precautions to be healthy.

To help you get there, the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) has these five tips for natural winter wellness.

Opt for healthy comfort food
In winter, we crave simple carbs because they are rich in tryptophan, creating our feel-good hormones such as serotonin and dopamine to temporarily increase. These foods, which are typically refined and have little nutritional value, cause a quick increase in our blood sugar followed by a quick decrease causing us to crave more. To avoid this vicious cycle while satisfying your cravings, opt for more complex carbs including oatmeal, legumes, soups and stews.

Dose up on vitamins and minerals
Iron, zinc and vitamin C are key to a healthy immune system that will ward off the cold and flu viruses. Foods rich in these nutrients include dark, leafy greens, red and yellow fruits and vegetables, lean red meats and pumpkin seeds. Taking a daily multivitamin is a great insurance policy to ensure you are getting your required daily intake of essential minerals and vitamins.

Go for garlic
The sulfur-containing compounds in garlic help increase the potency of two important cells of the immune system, T-lymphocytes and macrophages. These are essential to help battle the flu and colds. Opt for odourless capsules if you want to avoid the strong taste of garlic.

Use coconut oil
Winter-proof your skin with coconut oil by using it as a moisturizer. Simply rub a small amount of coconut oil wherever you have dry, flaky or itchy skin. It also works great as a natural lip balm, hair conditioner or make-up remover. Your skin will absorb the oil quickly, plus it smells wonderful!

Shake it up and sleep it off
When it comes to exercise, don't let winter be an excuse. Develop a well-rounded fitness routine that includes cardio and strength training. Also, give yourself plenty of rest time. Restful slumber helps fight depression and eliminates extra amounts of the stress hormone cortisol. Adequate amounts of exercise and sleep should be non-negotiable in maintaining a healthy lifestyle this winter.

NEWS CANADA/ CANADIAN HEALTH FOOD ASSOCIATION

Winter can take its toll on everything from your mood to your skin. Fight back. ISTOCK

Canadians big on kids and diving in

Three who make a difference. Encouraging youth with anti-violence app, student program and business drive

TAKARA SMALL
Metro News in Toronto
@takarasmall

Who: Entrepreneurs, community leaders and activists

Advice: "Growing up at risk of being extraordinary, I always tell youth that 'It's not where you start, but where you finish that counts,' and 'Don't let others set artificial limitations on you.'" – Ricky Neckles, entrepreneur and business owner

App developer Darren Baptiste, left, community activist Talisha Ramasroop and entrepreneur Ricky Neckles. ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

As Black History Month comes to an end, read on to learn about three Toronto-based individuals who are helping change Canada for the better.

Darren Baptiste, the app developer

The longtime app developer and coder may be an anomaly in the tech world, where diversity is often lacking.

At 46, Baptiste is self-taught and is getting plenty of attention with his latest mobile application called Cop Watch. The app records and uploads videos directly from a smartphone during incidents with police

"No one incident was behind it," he says. "Being bullied by police when stopped, or being harassed, or your rights being violated, all those are types of violence that people see on a daily basis and that contributes to the trauma of minority people, transgender, native… all types of communities."

Baptiste encourages youth to seek out opportunities in this growing field.

"If you think you'd like to write code, you can jump in and do it. You just need a computer and that's it."

Talisha Ramsaroop, the community activist

Although she was soft-spoken during my interview with her, York University student Talisha Ramsaroop has become a bold voice of change for her community.

She and her peers created and run a program called NOISE For Change that connects students from the university with youth from the Jane and Finch area.

The project opens doors for students at the university to learn more about the community and the residents who live there, but more importantly, Ramsaroop says, it's an opportunity to show youth the educational opportunities that exist beyond high school and combat low expectations.

"The program encourages students (from Jane and Finch) to pursue post-secondary education from that area because there is a stigma attached to that community and youth don't feel post-secondary is possible because of this stigma," she says.

The winner of the Lieutenant Lincoln Alexander award for her work in eliminating racial discrimination says one of the most fulfilling parts of the program is seeing youth rise above low expectations.

Ricky Neckles, the entrepreneur

Ricky Neckles is a busy man. The 24-year-old entrepreneur founded his own investment company, Neckles Global Enterprise Inc., and is the co-founder of TNTech Canada. He's also a public speaker and community worker.

Despite finding success in the business world after graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering, Neckles decided to branch out and start a business called Certified Ace Inc., which acts as a go-between for the hiring and completion of local services. "I wanted to make it drastically easier to hire services with a few clicks, while at the same time empowering independent professionals and small business to grow their businesses."

He hopes to inspire the next generation by emphasizing the main lesson he's learned along the way: Never let others dictate your future.

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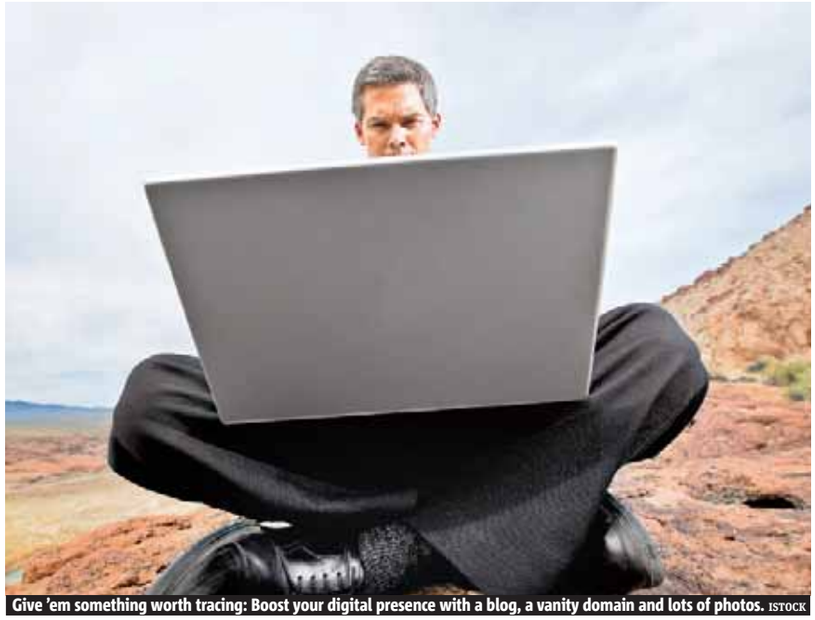
for Metro World News



Give 'em something worth tracing: Boost your digital presence with a blog, a vanity domain and lots of photos. ISTOCK

When Google, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook make your digital footprints visible to recruiters and selection committees, you can assume your online presence is being searched, creeped and crawled on a regular basis.

It sounds creepy, but those digital traces that we leave behind in social status updates, Instagram photoshares, blog comments, Amazon.com and eBay reviews are easy for someone to recover with a little digital sleuthing.

Altogether this small data accumulates in a rather random online story about you, but is it accurate?

To tell a different story about yourself, one more relevant than what Google's algorithm compiles, you'll need to be proactive.

Consider taking the following steps to add a new and more meaningful, useful and current story about yourself for recruiters, event planners, headhunters, advisory boards, talent scouts, award and search committees to discover:

Write a different story

Launch that blog you've always thought about. Don't know how to write code? Blogger (free and owned by Google), Tumblr and WordPress (both free as well) make it easy with professionally designed templates, tech support walk-throughs and huge communities of users to turn for advice and inspiration. Use your blog as a platform, mixing professional and personal (but always work-safe) content to tell a story about your lifestyle, work style and values, including the importance of work-life balance.

Make it personal

Purchase your vanity domain. In fact, purchase all of them. Protect your good name by grabbing your dot-com, then pick up your .ca, .net, even your .guru (yes, this is available soon). Name often misspelled? Purchase that one too. Have a super popular name and someone else has already registered it? No problem. Consider branding yourself with a signature (even trademarked) title (e.g., LindaLifeCoaching, DesignByDave, FredFixIt), your city (MikeWardTO), a professional suffix (DrTim, ProfessoryGary) or certification (JimChenCFA). Looking for a graduation present for someone in your family? Gift them their domain names.

There's one more reason to flex your digital creativity and mark your territory online. Taking charge and telling your story, documenting your special projects and passions, illustrating your goals and aspirations — these are all a total confidence boost. Actively maintain your online presence and the bonus is you'll be reminded of just how far you've travelled on your personal career journey.

Fully employed or not, and especially if you work in a field currently experiencing a skilled labour shortage or skills gap, you just may be the passive "star talent" candidate a recruiter is searching high and low for today, online. As employers follow your digital footprints — and they will — be sure you're one step ahead with an online story you're proud of.

Show, don't tell

Communicate your story visually. The truism that great images speak a thousand words has never been more relevant than today, with the rise of Instagram, Pinterest and Vine. The social web loves photos. Take advantage of that by visually documenting your personal style, your city, professional accomplishments, volunteering and community engagement. Spread a little joy with awesome images and in the process you'll engage and inspire others with a story of how you see the world.

Stay one step ahead of the creep and crawl

As employers follow your digital footprints — and they will — be sure you're one step ahead with an online story you're proud of.

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Ex-NFLer tackles life lessons in new book

Making choices. Matt Birk writes about steps to take to become the best version of yourself

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro World News

Former Minnesota Vikings offensive lineman Matt Birk has had his fair share of career ups and downs. He had to sit out the entire 2005 season due to a hip injury and thought his football career was over long before it actually was. But he's also a Super Bowl champ, having won in 2012 when playing for the Baltimore Ravens.

Though Birk says he never defined himself by his football career, the sport taught him a lot of important life lessons, enough to fill a book, which is why he teamed up with leading business expert Rich Chapman to write, All-Pro Wisdom: The 7 Choices That Lead To Greatness.

"Greatness isn't about achievements. It's not about winning the Super Bowl, being a CEO or any of that stuff. It's about being the greatest version of yourself," Birk tells us.

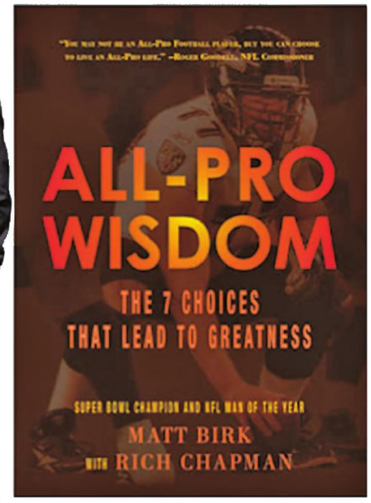
The book introduces seven qualities every person needs to reach his or her full potential, including passion, confidence, stability and focus, with tips on how to develop each quality. Birk explains how football is a great foundation for developing these traits and includes interviews with several superstar NFL players who embody them.

"One thing that surprised me right away about the NFL was how great men were in the NFL; not great players, but great men," Birk says. "We didn't tell these guys what we would be asking them for the book, and when we asked (Green Bay Packer quarterback) Aaron Rodgers about character, without batting an eyelash he said, 'I think it's about being consistent. I think it's about being a great leader.'"

Birk says his hip injury in 2005 was a good reminder to him of the danger of defining yourself by your career, a lesson he thinks everyone can learn from.

"Anyone can lose their job. Jobs are very temporary. But some people lose their job, start another career and turn around and say, 'Boy, losing my job was the best thing to ever happen to me.' And those tend to be people whose identity isn't wrapped up in what they do."

Conversely, Birk's career highlight — winning the Super Bowl — taught him another life lesson he includes in the book. "Everybody says they want to win the Super Bowl, but what are you going to do with the other 364 days of the year to make it happen? I think it's in the goal setting and dividing it into small, actionable steps so it's actually achievable."


ALL-PRO WISDOM
THE 7 CHOICES THAT LEAD TO GREATNESS
SUPER BOWL CHAMPION AND NFL MAN OF THE YEAR
MATT BIRK
WITH RICH CHAPMAN

Former NFL player Matt Birk, right, teamed up with business leader Rich Chapman to write his new book. CONTRIBUTED

Setting goals to achieve your dream

"Everybody says they want to win the Super Bowl, but what are you going to do with the other 364 days of the year to make it happen?"

Former NFL player Matt Birk

Doing dads proud

The book has been out for about two weeks and Birk says what's been most rewarding is hearing how parents have used it to teach their kids about the importance of character and setting goals in a way that isn't forced or boring.

- "Three different dads told me that every week, they grab a burger with their son and talk about a chapter. I'm a parent. I have six kids and I know how hard parenting is. Each day you feel like you're falling short. To be able to provide parents with a useful tool has been very fulfilling," he says.

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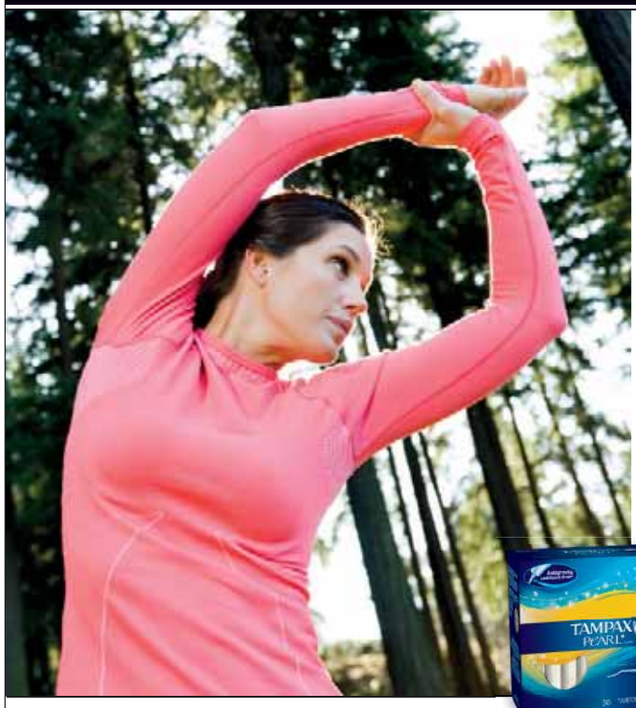
STAY WELL

It's time for a fresh start! A new year is the time to commit to taking care of yourself so you can take care of the ones you love. It only takes a few minutes each day, and a few simple strategies, to keep you feeling your very best.



USE YOUR BODY

You don't need a gym – or even any free time! – to get in the best shape of your life. Here are three no-equipment-needed moves you can do anywhere. Try them the next time you're waiting for your kids to finish hockey practice or dance lessons. And no matter where – or when – you work out, make sure Tampax Pearl Active is there with you. It keeps you protected so you can keep your mind on your workout, not your period.

1 WALL SIT
Pressing your back against the wall, squat down into a sitting position. Hold for as long as you can. You'll build strong glutes, thighs and calves as you increase your time.

2 ARM CIRCLES
Hold your arms out straight at either side at shoulder level. Alternate rotating your arms in small and large circles, backwards and forwards. You'll build shapely, lean arms and shoulders.

3 SIDE BENDS
Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, your arms over your head and your hands clasped. Bend sideways from the waist, lengthening your arms as you bend. You'll develop your obliques for a strong core.

HEALTHY MOM HAPPY FAMILY

MAKE TOOTH CARE A FAMILY AFFAIR

You make sure your kids floss, brush and rinse regularly, but are you following your own advice? An easy way to get everyone in the habit is to make flossing, brushing and rinsing with Crest Pro-Health products a daily game. You'll be modelling good oral hygiene for your kids, and your smile will be in tip-top shape.

FOR THE KIDS Play a favourite song that's between two and three minutes long and dance along while you brush. Or try Oral-B Deep Sweep 5000 Brush with its cute happy-face timer that ticks down the minutes till you're done.

FOR YOU Protect against plaque and gingivitis, plus fight pesky bad breath, by keeping a small bottle of Crest Pro-Health Multi-Protection Rinse in your purse for after lunch. Add Crest Pro-Health toothpaste and an Oral-B toothbrush, and soon you'll have a great daily habit.

To ensure these products are right for you, read and follow the labels. Crest® Pro-Health Toothpaste fights cavities, plaque, tartar and gingivitis, and treats tooth sensitivity. Crest® Pro-Health Multi-Protection Rinse fights gingivitis. Crest Pro-Health toothpaste is for adults and children 12 years and older. Crest Pro-Health Stages toothpaste fights cavities. Oral-B power toothbrushes are for ages 3+.

VICKS Meta mucil Oral-B Crest always

JUICE UP!

Juice is a terrific source of antioxidants and vitamins, but it usually lacks pulp, so it's low in fibre.[1] Want to give your morning juice or smoothie a tasty fibre boost? Add a dose of Metamucil. It dissolves best in cool liquids and tastes so good you'd never suspect it promotes digestive health[2] and helps lower cholesterol levels[3] to promote heart health. Orange and Pink Lemonade flavours brighten up tangy grapefruit juice, and Berry Blast flavour gives an extra zing to blueberry-pomegranate juice.

To ensure this product is right for you, always read and follow the label.
1-Source: http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/juicing/AN02107. 2-By relieving irregularity.
3-Lowers mildly to moderately elevated cholesterol levels when taken with a low fat diet.

GET LOST, COLDS AND FLUS!

You're worried that your kids are packing a little something extr in their backpacks. But you could be the one bringing germs home without knowing it.

Studies have shown that public bathrooms and restaurants aren't the germiest places. Surprisingly, it's humble grocery carts that take the top prize. Upwards of 72% of cart handles have bacteria and those nasty bugs.

Always wash your hands well after touching a grocery-cart handle. Scrub as long as a rendition of "Happy Birthday." Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can help reduce the bacteria on your hands when hand washing is not an option. If you do end up with a cold, DayQuil and NyQuil can help you get back on your feet and feel better fast.

To ensure this product is right for you, always read and follow the label. Vicks DayQuil Cold & Flu relieves fever, headache, cough and nasal congestion. Vicks NyQuil Cold & Flu relieves fever, headache, cough and runny nose.

GO ONLINE FOR MORE HELPFUL TIPS

To get your year off to a fresh start, go online for more tips designed for busy moms. Go to **www.staywellmom.ca.**

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*Lowers mildly to moderately elevated cholesterol levels when taken with a low-fat diet
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To ensure this product is right for you, always read and follow the label.

† Source Healthcare Analytics, 2012. © 2014 P&G

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Health Solutions

Live a little with liver

NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

If you truly have a cholesterol problem, turn the page. Still reading? OK, but this is the honour system.

Pâté is a French favourite for a few reasons. It is smooth, creamy and intense, and a little goes a long way flavour-wise.

The addition of duck fat, however, makes it out of bounds for many.

Liver itself is nourishing. It is rich in Vitamin A, which is great for your eyes (unless you are pregnant, then it can be too high for baby), B12, to help keep heart-disease-causing homocysteine levels low, protein and iron.

Aside from duck fat, there are caveats — and big ones. Liver is high in cholesterol, which isn't a problem for most. But if your doctor has asked you to avoid it, do so.

In addition, liver is the organ that cleanses the body of all kinds of toxins. Which means, whatever the animal was exposed to can get concentrated in their liver and you would be consuming pesticide, medication and environmental toxins.

Simple solution? Go organic. Organic chickens are fed organic feed, which reduces their load and, in turn, yours. They are available at health-food stores and well worth the effort. Like, once in a while. Don't be doing this weekly, sheesh.

Trim livers of any fat or and simply pan fry on high heat with garlic and oregano for a traditional Greek treat. It's excellent as an appetizer! Or, bust out the hand blender and puree into pâté. Either way, classic Mediterranean simplicity is at your finger tips.

THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

All pâté roads lead to a red-wine-sipping kind of meal

THERESA ALBERT
myfriendinfood.com

Traditional pâté is often made with about 50 per cent added saturated fat. This recipe uses extra virgin olive oil and a little bit of butter but nets a smooth and creamy spread that can be the centrepiece for your next Friday night charcuterie platter.

Spread on veggies, add some hummus and make it a simple, red-wine-sipping kind of meal.

This recipe serves six. COURTESY THERESA ALBERT

Ingredients

- 1 lb organic chicken livers
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp butter, melted and divided
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp thyme
- Black pepper, to taste

1. Clean livers and remove ducts and any fat. Rinse in a colander and place into a large casserole dish.

2. Add remaining ingredients, except pepper, and bake at 300 F for 30 minutes until very firm. Stir once during baking.

3. Allow to cool and use a hand wand to puree well.

4. Using a spatula place into jars, top with ground pepper and drizzle with melted butter.

THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND TORONTO PERSONAL NUTRITIONIST. SHE FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

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Select Canadian insurers have started offering usage-based car insurance on an optional basis. This option, while still new, may be a cost-effective solution for some drivers.

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HOW DO YOU SPELL SUCCESS

AN MBA CAN HELP ACHIEVE GOALS

MINERVA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Sometimes, you only need three letters to spell success — MBA.

Whether you are looking to increase your career potential, make a career change, or just add more tools to the toolbox, getting a master of business administration (MBA) can help you achieve these goals.

But when it finally comes down to choosing where to study your MBA, there are a number of factors to consider.

First is your time.

Getting your MBA can be quite time consuming, but there are a number of programs that offer different program lengths. Most business schools understand that many students are working professionals and cater to their busy schedules through flexible programming options.

If you plan on keeping your day job while getting your MBA, consider looking at a business school that offers an MBA program that takes place during evenings, weekends, or even online.

While online options are becoming increasingly more popular — with more schools starting offer this option — it is important to consider the value of the networking opportunities available to students who physically attend class. In some cases, potential employment opportunities can come down to who you know and a major pro when weighing your options.

For those who are ready to dive head first into their education, be sure to check out a school that offers a full-time option, or even an accelerated program.

Another factor to consider is your current level of education and whether you meet the entrance requirements to your desired program. When it comes to admissions requirements, each school has its own set. Some may ask for a degree in business to apply, while others may just ask for a university degree — it comes down to each individual school.

Location can also play a key role in the decision-making process.

Some of the best learning opportunities can be made during internships or work placements, so it may be a great idea to focus on a market in which you would ideally like to be employed.

No matter which MBA you decide to pursue, remember that it is an investment in yourself and that return on investment will be worth it in the long haul.

PERSONALIZED FOR STUDENTS

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY MBA

CONTRIBUTED

When one thinks about an MBA program, flexibility is not usually the first thing that comes to mind.

While it may be hard to believe, that is exactly the goal of the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) MBA.

"With our online courses and part-time options that are personalized to meet the student's needs, our students are able to study a quality program and achieve their educational goals while maintaining their work and personal commitments," says Victoria Baker, director MBA program.

As one of the most flexible MBA programs in Canada, TRU students are able to customize their learning styles by either choosing to study on-campus, online or through a blended combination.

While the delivery format for each student may be different, the end goal is the same.

"An MBA is recognized worldwide as a program of study that provides competency in all the major functional management areas of an organization, preparing graduates to lead and manage effectively in today's complex and rapidly-changing business environment," Baker says.

The TRU MBA is a two-year program, with a possibility of a 12-month accelerated program for those with and undergraduate degree in business.

For more information and to view admissions requirements, visit tru.ca/business/mba.

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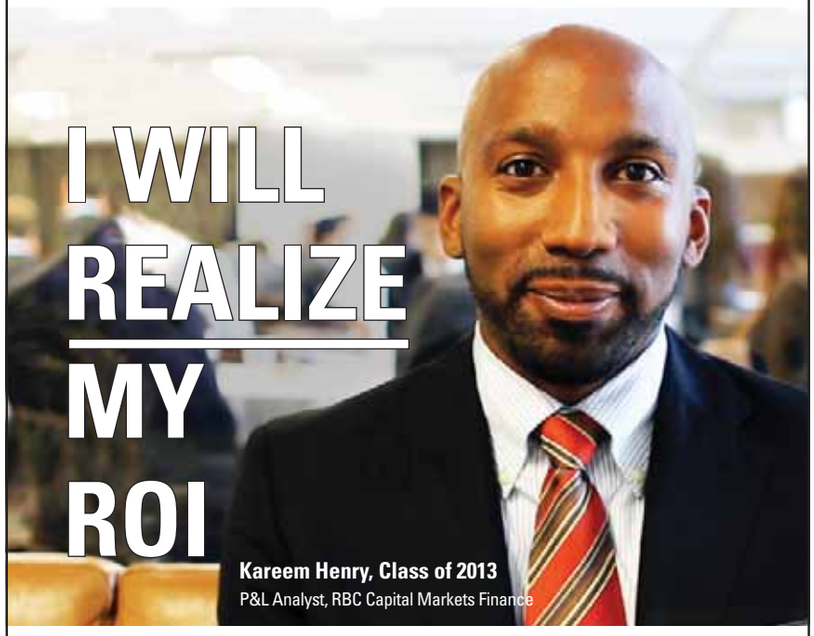

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Everyone Makes a Mark

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LAUNCH NEW IDEAS AT WILFRID LAURIER

All businesses and organizations start out as an idea.

No matter how impossible the idea may seem, it takes someone with an entrepreneurial spirit to make that idea into a viable business.

The Laurier MBA in entrepreneurship is a unique MBA program where students can earn their MBA while launching their own business at the same time.

"Entrepreneurship is a mindset or behaviour to build and create," says Steve Farlow, executive director, Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship, Wilfrid Laurier University.

"Laurier entrepreneurship students can say, 'I have done it, I have experienced it.' It is a big plus to prospective employers."

Students may apply to the Laurier LaunchPad program to attempt to create and launch a sustainable, profitable business for full course credit.

The Laurier LaunchPad is an experiential learning opportunity for students and alumni to discover, validate, and launch an innovative new venture by giving them a space and mentorship to succeed.

Laurier MBA students Sandra Muir and Erin Klassen have taken advantage of the LaunchPad program, starting an online gift registration business that is designed for children and teens.

Klassen says the experience has been extremely valuable since it has provided them with a safe place to fail, which will ultimately lead to their success.

"(LaunchPad) really guides you and gives you the best chance of succeeding," says Klassen, who is also employed as am HR manager with Vidyard. "It lets you apply what you have learned in a real-life setting."

While the project has pivoted from the original business pitch, Muir and Klassen both say the process of the program has guided them towards an idea that will ultimately be more successful.

A big part of their growth through this stage was the face-to-face interactions with their target markets and discovering what the market was truly in need of from their business, adding that this process can be used in every profession, not just a start up business.

"The core validation process is key to a lot of a variety of work experience," says Muir, social media strategist for Wilfrid Laurier University, and LaunchPad entrepreneur.

For more information about the Laurier MBA, visit lauriermba.ca.

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

GAIN IT AT DEGROOTE

CONTRIBUTED

Alex Avery has had a front row seat to the stock market from a euphoric period a decade ago, through the credit crisis, and then back to something "in the middle."

Now leading the real estate research team for CIBC World Markets, Avery credits his MBA from the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University for giving him access to Bay Street. He isn't alone.

"I remember when I joined CIBC," he says. "There were an uncanny number of DeGroote graduates working at CIBC and elsewhere in the financial district."

These days, Avery says, an MBA is one of the few things that will get an applicant's resumé through the first screening.

"The classroom experience of the MBA is an important aspect in the development of finance professionals."

Dr. Leonard Waverman, dean of the DeGroote School of Business, agrees. Speaking from the school's Burlington campus, where MBA classes are held, Waverman emphasizes the mix of classroom and practical experience that sets DeGroote apart.

"Experience matters. With Canada's oldest co-op MBA program at a university renowned for research, DeGroote has built a reputation for producing graduates with the skills and experience necessary for success in today's financial markets."

Beyond the co-op option, DeGroote offers full- and part-time traditional MBA programs, as well as an accelerated program that allows those with an undergraduate business degree to complete an MBA in just eight months.

Avery is quick to point out that an MBA is a very personal and individual endeavour.

"The flexibility of the program is what really made it worthwhile and enjoyable. I knew where I wanted to go upon graduation and I was able to tailor my classes to my interests. It was perfect."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Alex Avery joined CIBC in 2005, and leads its North American real estate research team. His team covers more than 40 REITs and real estate corporations, of which he covers more than 20 directly.

Avery earned his CFA designation, holds both a master of business administration and a bachelor of engineering and management from McMaster University.

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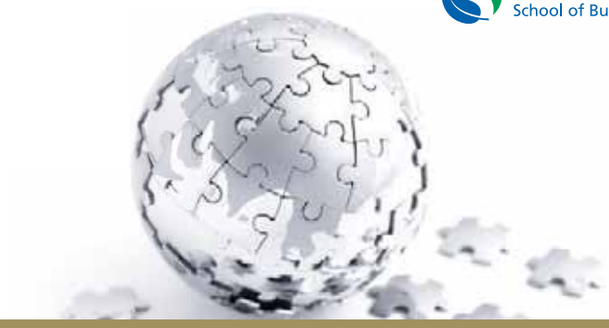

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SCHULICH STUDENTS PUT IDEAS TO THE TEST

MBA students with an entrepreneurial bent will be putting their bright ideas to the test this month at the Schulich StartUp Day competition hosted by Kinetic Café in partnership with Schulich School of Business at York University.

Among them will be Sunny Shao, an MBA student specializing in entrepreneurial studies and the president of Schulich's entrepreneurship and venture capital club, who plans to launch her own start-up enterprise in the financial technology sector with a co-founder when she graduates in April.

The Schulich StartUp Day competition is one of many initiatives created by the Schulich School of Business and the school's Career Development Centre to tap into a growing trend of MBA students who dream of starting their own business someday.

In January, Schulich announced the appointment of its first-ever entrepreneur-in-residence, Chris Carder, co-founder of the wildly successful ThinData, and its partnership with innovation consulting firm Kinetic Café Inc. to help students conceptualize and launch their own businesses. The co-founders and senior executives at Kinetic Café, who include some of Canada's most accomplished digital industry entrepreneurs and experts, will work with Schulich's Career Development Centre and entrepreneurship and family enterprise programs to support students who are interested in launching their own start-up companies.

The initiatives augment Schulich's many course offerings, including a new MBA-level course in social entrepreneurship, taught by Geoffrey Kistruck, associate professor, and Ron Binns, chair in entrepreneurship, which was launched in September. The social entrepreneurship course includes a consulting project with social entrepreneurs, a visit to a social enterprise incubator and an opportunity for students to become an actual social investor through kiva (kiva.org) and other emerging social investment vehicles.

CONTRIBUTED

"It's all very new and very exciting," says Shao, 29. "We have a lot of entrepreneurship classes and events but having the new entrepreneur-in-residence and partnership with Kinetic Café is the first time we're really bridging the gap between academics and the real world. There are a few students who have products already. I think there will be at least 10 applications (for StartUp Day) but students who don't compete can still attend the StartUp Day seminars and get help."

The Schulich StartUp Day event is planned as part of the StartUp Weekend event being held across Canada from March 28-30.

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It could be the flexibility of offering the program through a full-time or part-time program option, the location of the facility in proximity to Toronto's business core, the success rate of graduates, or that the Ryerson MBA is one of the most affordable MBA programs in the GTA, if not the most affordable in the Canada.

"We have designed the program to be accessible to Canadians," says Dr. Dale Carl, MBA director of graduate students at the Ryerson MBA.

The Ryerson MBA has been designed with the goal to provide business and management education to all qualified students irrespective of their financial capabilities.

Ryerson MBA was ranked fourth in Canada by the Canadian Business Magazine this year, which makes the Ryerson MBA the preferred option for prospective students, offering a great return on investment.

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Ryerson offers two MBA programs — the MBA in the management of technology and innovation, unique in Canada, and the MBA global program.

As part of the MBA experience at Ryerson, students have the opportunity to take part in a work placement in their final term, which Carl says has often turned into full-time job offers for 60 per cent of the students interested in this option.

Another way to add to the student's education are case competitions, which help to sharpen a student's analytical abilities and presentation skills, while learning to work efficiently as a team under pressure. Ryerson students consistently perform well in these competitions and often place in the top three, which is remarkable for a one-year, full-time program.

Ryerson recently placed first in both the sustainability case at the MBA Games, and at the Rotman NetImpact competition.

APPLICATIONS

Applications for the spring and fall intakes for the Ryerson MBA are fast approaching.

Deadline for the foundation term — spring with a May start is March 7 for international students and March 28 for domestic students.

Deadline for the September start is April 4 for international students and June 6 for domestic students.

Please visit ryerson.ca/mba for more information on deadlines and admissions requirements.

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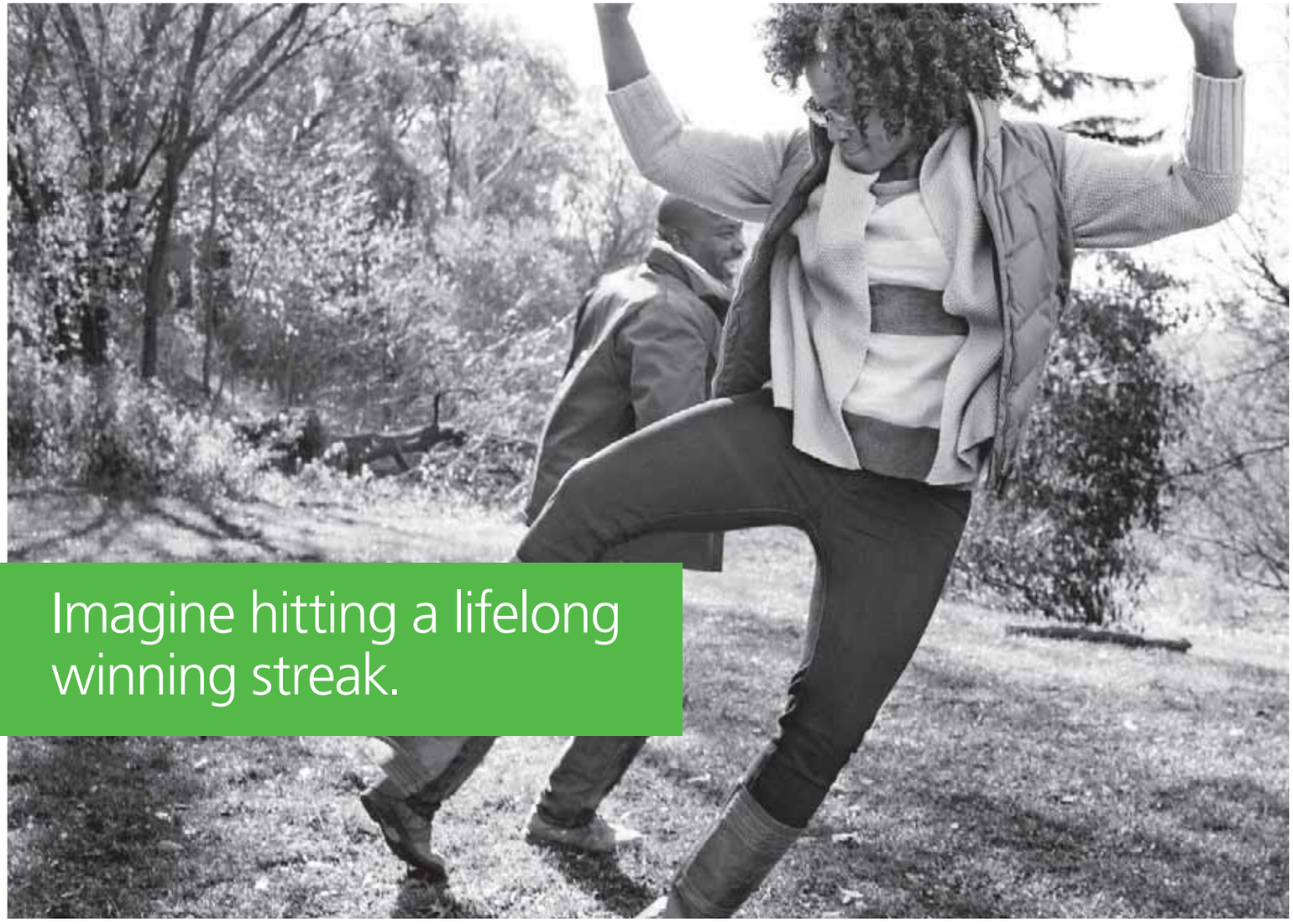

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Contribution deadline looms

Last-minute tips. You have until March 3 to deposit money into retirement savings fund

YLVA VAN BUUREN
For Metro

March 3 is the deadline to contribute to your RRSP for the 2013 financial year. VLADIMIR GJORGIEV/SHUTTERSTOCK

The deadline for making your RRSP contribution is approaching, but there is still time to contribute.

Check the bottom of your 2012 notice of assessment to see how much contribution room you have accumulated (any unused room is carried forward and the total unused balanced will be shown there). Canadians can contribute up to 18 per cent of earned income to the maximum room, which is $23,820 for 2013.

Here are some last-minute contribution tips.

• Mark March 3 on your calendar — that's the cut-off date for 2013 contributions. Most financial institutions are open later and on weekends to accommodate the last-minute rush. Or contribute via Internet banking.

• Don't over-think it. If you need help deciding where to put your RRSP contribution, just put it into a high-interest savings account or a low-risk money market mutual fund, says Christopher Dewdney, a Toronto financial adviser and member of Advocis, The Financial Advisors Association of Canada. "It doesn't matter where it's goes just as long as it's registered. You'll receive a tax deduction and can create a properly allocated and well diversified portfolio at a later date."

• Use money from your tax-free savings account (TFSA). "If you need a tax deduction and you don't have access to cash but you do have money in a TFSA, move the money from your TFSA into your RRSP." With the TFSA, you can use that room again beginning January of the following year.

• Take out an RRSP catch-up loan. All financial institutions offer these loans, which allow you to borrow money for your RRSP. Keep in mind that if the loan is over too long a period, you could offset the gains (tax deduction) you get with the RRSP, Dewdney said.

• If your income was lower than previous years and you might not need the RRSP deduction, it's still a good idea to contribute, Dewdney said. "You can always defer the contribution to a future year if that will be more beneficial."

• For next year. Set up a systematic contribution plan now and you will be off to a good start for next year. "Even if you want to make a larger contribution come tax time, you'll already have a base," Dewdney said.

Impact. Divorce can split assets

TALBOT BOGGS
Smart Investing

A couple's RRSPs often are split during a divorce. AUREMAR/SHUTTERSTOCK

Going through a divorce is difficult at any age, but grey divorces involving couples 50 years or older can have a major impact on their retirement plans and assets like an RRSP.

A recent study by Winnipeg-based Investors Group found that about 80 per cent of grey divorcees say they will probably delay their retirement because they need to work longer than planned and 62 per cent said their post-divorce savings and investments will no longer be adequate to fund their retirement.

"In a divorce you might feel emotionally liberated but financially you could be a lot worse off," said Chris Buttigieg, senior manager, wealth planning strategy with BMO Financial Group. "Divorce poses some really challenges for people when retirement is around the corner."

In case of separation or divorce, either you or your spouse can transfer existing RRSPs to the other without being subject to tax provided you are living apart when property and assets are settled and provided you have a written separation agreement or a court order.

A couple's RRSPs often are split between partners during a divorce, but a lot of what happens will depend on the terms of the settlement.

Attribution rules (tax rules to prevent excess income splitting) regarding spousal RRSP and RRIF (registered retirement income fund) withdrawals will not apply to any withdrawals made after you and your spouse have begun to live separately and apart. Your soon-to-be-ex can continue to make spousal RRSP contributions to your spousal RRSP until the date you cease to be spouses, or the date of divorce.

"Women tend to have more attachment to the home but liquid assets tend to go the other spouse," Buttigieg said. "In cases like these there's a danger of becoming house rich and cash poor and finding yourself in the situation of wondering how you're going to carry the house and expenses."

One of the big problems with divorce is that it is often a bitter experience, which can affect your judgment.

The Investors Group study found that people who characterized their divorce as bitter experienced greater financial difficulties than those whose divorce was more cordial, such as managing living expenses after the divorce or separation, stress from the division of assets, the cost of divorce proceedings and no longer having enough retirement savings.

"Divorce is an emotional process that can cloud your ability to make sound financial decisions that will ultimately affect your future," said Christine Van Cauwenberghe, assistant vice-president of tax and estate planning with Investors Group. "With limited earning power and less time to recoup financial losses, grey divorcees need to revisit their financial plans."

A good financial planner will help you assess your financial situation, clarify your goals as a new single person and advise you on what you can do to meet those goals.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TALBOT BOGGS IS A TORONTO-BASED BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL WHO HAS WORKED WITH NATIONAL NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, MAGAZINES AND CORPORATIONS IN THE FINANCE, RETAIL, MANUFACTURING AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL SECTORS.

A secret to saving more money

Do you want to know a secret? There is another tax-free way to save for retirement that the taxman doesn't really want you to know. It's called universal life insurance, a special financial security portfolio that gives you life and health insurance coverage and a tax-deferred saving component.

Insurance experts from Desjardins Insurance spoke more about universal life insurance.

What makes this product special?

It's attractive because it allows you to reduce your tax burden by moving some of your taxable money and sheltering it within the universal life policy. Your money grows more efficiently allowing you to achieve an earlier retirement. This is especially effective if you tend to maximize your annual RRSP contribution. It's like moving your coins from a pocket with a hole in it to one with no hole. Universal life is very flexible and totally conforms to your needs because you can add or remove features and increase or decrease premiums at any time.

So how does it work?

The individual designs the portfolio based on their current personal and/or family priorities. They may choose from a variety of insurances including term, whole life and/or critical illness. The monthly minimum deposit covers the cost of the insurance and anything above this will accumulate in a tax advantaged savings account.

How can I invest my money under the savings component?

There are a lot of investment options available. For example, you can choose between guaranteed deposits or index funds. These funds can be accessed anytime, barring any restrictions attached to the investment type, making this an ideal emergency or retirement fund.

NEWS CANADA

Americans Phil Kessel, left, and James van Riemsdyk will have a lighter-than-usual work week at their regular jobs with the Leafs after returning from Sochi.
RICHARD LAUTENS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Wouldn't it be nice? Leafs getting healthy

Back to the grind.
Toronto roster should look a little closer to complete after Olympics

With 22 regular-season games remaining, the Maple Leafs are getting closer to having the lineup they penciled in coming out of training camp in September.

Through injuries and suspensions, the Leafs have struggled to maintain a stable roster and it has led to an inconsistent season so far.

Now, however, centre Trevor Smith is close to returning from a broken hand, and centre Dave Bolland is set to come back from a severed ankle tendon. Bolland hasn't played since Nov. 2, while Smith has been out since Dec. 17.

Just as important for the stretch run, Phil Kessel and James van Riemsdyk have been performing at their best levels all season long, and Kessel especially enjoyed a productive Olympic run in Sochi.

Neither U.S. Olympian was at practice on Monday; Kessel was just about to land from Russia and JVR was expected to fly in Monday night after visiting his parents in New Jersey.

Both players will likely be back at practice Tuesday and then will get Wednesday and Friday off out of "respect" for the emotions they went through playing for their country and the wear and tear on their bodies during the Olympic participation, Leafs coach Randy Carlyle said.

The Leafs return to action on Long Island on Thursday night then travel to Montreal on Saturday before returning home Monday against Columbus. The Leafs play 22 games in 45 nights to close out the season. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Lockdown logic

"Defence does win. It's as simple a statement as you can make."

Maple Leafs coach Randy Carlyle saying he hopes the players take a lesson in how Canada played at the Olympics, especially in the gold-medal game.

NHL

X-rays show Stamkos not well enough to play

Injured Tampa Bay Lightning star Steven Stamkos is recovering, but not ready yet to return to the lineup.

Stamkos is sitting out a four-game post-Olympic trip that starts Thursday at Nashville.

Stamkos underwent X-rays on Monday that revealed that his broken right shin, which has sidelined him since November, is improving, but not enough for him to be cleared to play in games.

The centre will travel with the team to continue practising, and is expected to be examined again when the Lightning return for a homestand that begins March 6 against Buffalo.

Stamkos was injured on Nov. 11 in Boston. He has 14 goals and 23 points in 17 games this season.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Home-plate collisions

Rule change 'not a radical departure'

Rather than ban home-plate collisions outright, Major League Baseball and its players adopted a rule limiting them this season.

In what both sides said was a one-year experiment, the rule allows collisions if the catcher has the ball and is blocking the runner's direct path to home plate, and if the catcher goes into the basepath to field a throw to the plate.

"It's not a radical departure from what it had been," Tampa Bay Rays manager Joe Maddon said.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Olympians return to Canada from on high

Olympians Mike Riddle and Dara Howell arrive in Toronto after winning silver and gold in Sochi. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

There were hugs, cheers and even some tears as a number of Olympians stepped back onto home soil Monday after an exhilarating two weeks at the Sochi Games.

Medallists Dara Howell and Mike Riddle were among the athletes greeted by a wave of applause and a wall of flashing cameras as they arrived at Pearson International Airport.

Howell, who won gold in women's slopestyle skiing, said it felt wonderful to be home.

"I'm so excited to be back here," she said. "Overall it was such a great experience and Canada did amazing."

The 19-year-old from Huntsville said her thrilling time in Sochi, Russia, marked only the beginning of her career.

"This is just the start for me," she said. "I just want to keep going and having as much fun as possible. We'll see where I end up."

Meanwhile Riddle, who won the silver medal in the men's ski halfpipe, was overwhelmed by the throng of media and onlookers waiting to greet returning athletes.

"I was not expecting such a big welcoming party," said Riddle, who was heading on to Vancouver. "It's been a long trip and to come home to fans and Canadians and see all this is pretty cool."
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Glad dad

"She worked for four years to get to this point, so it's awesome."

Dara Howell's father Doug

NBA. Collins among old pals in return to the Nets

Jason Collins has a week and a half to prove himself to the Brooklyn Nets.

He signed a 10-day contract, one of the toughest deals in sports because it gives non-superstars almost no time to impress their coaches and teammates in hopes of sticking around.

With this group, Collins did that long ago: The Nets locker-room is filled with former teammates who have already accepted the league's first openly gay player and his on-court habits, which are the ones that matter most to them.

"Guys already know what … to expect from me. It's like, OK, he's not going to magically have a 40-inch vertical (leap) and shoot 3s," Collins said.

That made it the ideal place for his historic return to the NBA.

Jason Collins makes a pass on Sunday. MARK J. TERRILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Old teammate Jason Kidd coaches the team. Collins played with Joe Johnson in Atlanta and Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce in Boston, and they are now the respected veterans in Brooklyn.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Trout's contract talks won't slow big fish: Manager

Angels manager Mike Scioscia said Monday that he isn't worried about possible contract talks becoming a distraction for star centre-fielder Mike Trout.

"It's not an issue and it's certainly not an issue with Mike," Scioscia said.

Published reports have said the team and Trout are discussing a long-term deal.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL combine

Clowney displays speed, strength

Jadeveon Clowney made things tougher for Johnny Manziel and the other potential No. 1 picks Monday.

The former South Carolina star ran the fastest 40-yard dash time of the defensive linemen. NFL.com reported the unofficial time at 4.47 seconds.

He did 21 reps at 225 pounds in the weightlifting workout, putting him in the second half of defensive ends. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raps not taking easy stretch for granted

Toronto Raptors coach Dwane Casey says teams with nothing to gain have the tendency to play more loose late in the season. JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY IMAGES FILE

NBA. Remaining games may warrant relief, but Toronto is well aware of the underdog's bite

Fans of the Raptors look at the rest of the NBA regular season schedule, and some drool in anticipation.

They see cupcakes and no-hopers, lottery-bound teams that may spend the final quarter of the season mailing in games. They see wins.

The anecdotal evidence may indeed be reason for at least cautious optimism.

After a road-heavy run-up to the all-star break, the Raptors do have what looks on paper to be a relatively easy stretch.

Of the team's remaining 26 games, only eight are against teams that currently have a winning record and 14 are at home.

They finish with what looks like a cakewalk, a final 10 days against going-nowhere New York (twice), Philadelphia, Milwaukee and Detroit.

So fans can get excited, perhaps — but the players never will.

Coach Dwane Casey called Sunday's easy win over the Orlando Magic a game that was a "fight against human nature," because it's easy to look at a team's record and have a tendency to coast.

The Raptors — and their fans — should be entirely wary of counting March and April victories as certainties before the games have been played, and that's why looking at the schedule might be considered fool's gold.

How many times in Toronto franchise history have the Raptors won games they probably should have lost late in a non-playoff season?

As Casey has pointed out repeatedly over the last few weeks, teams with bad records and nothing to gain have a tendency to play more freely and more loose late in the season; the Raptors themselves have done that recently, posting winning records out of nowhere in the final five or six weeks of the season. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gunning for the #3 spot

- **Raptors.** Record: 31-25, games remaining: 26, home: 14 road: 12
- **Nets.** Record: 26-28, games remaining: 28, home: 14 road: 14
- **Bulls.** Record: 29-26, games remaining: 27, home: 15 road: 12

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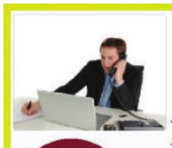

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
There are a number of things you need to get rid of, things that are stopping you from realizing your potential. You know what they are and you know they must go. Now is the time put the past behind you.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You need to find ways to further your ambitions while not appearing too selfish. This is a time of great opportunity. Stay calm, stay focused and, above all, stay the course.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You are going to have to make a difficult choice and what you decide will affect your life for years to come. Only you can make this choice but it's got to be one thing or the other. The worst choice is no choice at all.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
The Sun in Pisces boosts your confidence and make it easier to take chances. Not that you should push your luck at every opportunity but you do need to be a bit more adventurous.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
One of your more impulsive moods could lead to something good . . . or something bad. You will get into risky situations – the sort you like best – but you know how to get out of them too.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Because the approaching new moon falls in the partnership sector of your chart you will find it easier to identify with and sympathize with other people's worries. Help them if you can but don't let their worries rub off on you.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Take care you don't get too close to a situation and lose your sense of perspective. You need to make a conscious decision to stand back from what you are doing and see the bigger picture.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Put your own interests first and start work on something you have been thinking about for months. This is an excellent day for creative activities, so put your doubts behind you and follow your dream.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If a loved one demands more independence you must give it to them. You should know by now that the harder you try to control other people the more it hurts when they finally break away.

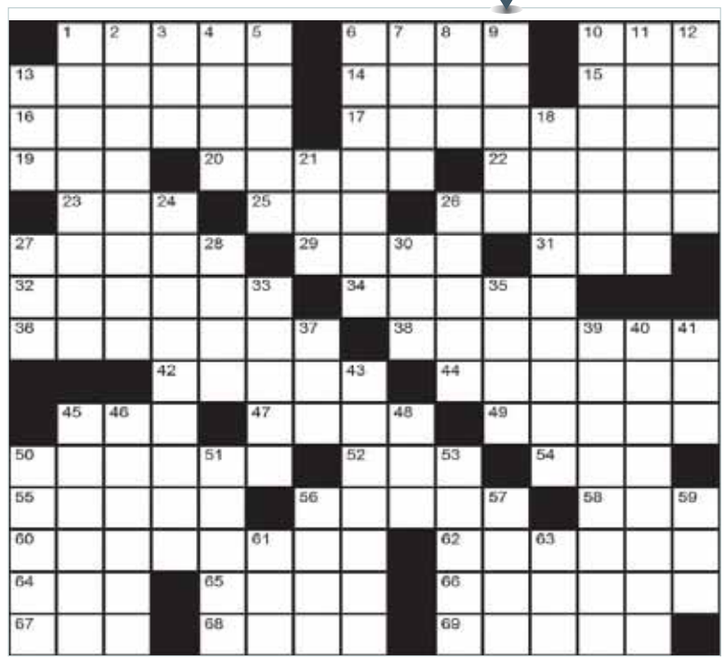
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You will get a lot out of social activities today, so make the effort to get out into the world. The more you engage with people the more you will see how similar we all are.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If you want something enough you will find a way to get it, no matter how many obstacles are placed in your path. Whatever challenges you face you are big enough and tough enough to deal with them.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Success is yours if you want it enough, so do you? Pisces is often a laid back sort of sign, so maybe you are happy taking each day as it comes. If so, that's okay – you are who you are. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

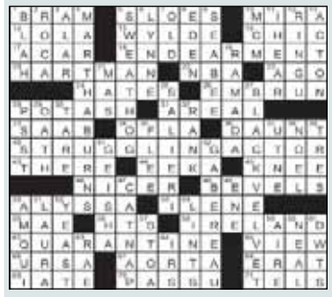
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.



Across
1. Nary _ __ (Nobody)
6. Bible boy
10. Ms. Gardner
13. Refinement
14. Taj Mahal's site
15. Vancouver-born actor Mr. Bellows
16. Manitoba: __. __ Provincial Park
17. Oscars: 2014 Best Original Song nominee "Happy" by __ Williams
19. URL ending
20. Singer Ms. Baker
22. Choreographer Mr. Terrio
23. E-Mail sending acronym
25. Santa __, California
26. Pamper
27. Tidal bore
29. "Sand in My Shoes" singer
31. Coral†reef
32. Great Pyramid of Giza commissioning Pharaoh
34. Sally Field's Oscar-winning role, __ Rae
36. 1998 Barenaked Ladies chart-topper: 2 wds.
38. Rumour
42. Mister, in Madrid
44. Little wave
45. Is able to
47. United __ Emirates
49. Reservations
50. Least wild
52. Global currency org.
54. Green Day drummer, __ Cool
55. Stevie Wonder's "_ __ Called to Say I Love You"
56. Cherish
58. "The Age of Innocence" (1993) actress ...her initials-
60. Laurentian locale, Saint-__
62. Reverberations
64. French article
65. Marvel Comics superhero
66. Flunky
67. Bottom-of-letter letters
68. Articulates
69. 1953 John Wayne movie

Down
1. German highway
2. Robert Service poem, The Cremation of __ __
3. __ _ whim
4. Calif. campus
5. British singer Ms. Lewis
6. 2014 Best Picture nominee, "__ Phillips"
7. Turkish official or military title
8. Mr. Gershwin
9. Elaine __ ("Taxi" role for Marilu Henner)
10. Schedule
11. In a despicable manner
12. Festive song: "O Come, __ __ Faithful"
13. White House defence advisory gr.
18. Locale of pre-Oscars telecast action: 2 wds.
21. Polit. designation
24. __ Pass (Alberta community in The Rockies)
26. Apples gadget
27. Green
28. Sword sort
30. Play-__
33. La Chambre Rouge occupant, __ du Canada
35. But: French
37. North or South country [abbr.]
39. BC mining community
40. Other self: 2 wds.
41. Thumbs-up
43. Invading ilks
45. Descendants of Acadians in Louisiana
46. Makes funny
48. Canuck financial inst.
50. Standstill
51. Sporty figures
53. New
56. Skipper's salute
57. Prefix meaning 'Outer'
59. Compass dir.
61. "__-ching!"
63. Distinguished [abbr.]

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku

6	7	3	8	4	9	1	2	5
2	8	5	1	7	6	4	9	3
1	9	4	2	3	5	8	7	6
5	2	7	3	8	4	6	1	9
4	6	9	5	2	1	3	8	7
3	1	8	9	6	7	5	4	2
9	4	6	7	5	8	2	3	1
7	5	2	4	1	3	9	6	8
8	3	1	6	9	2	7	5	4

Today
-6°/-15°
Variable

Wednesday
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Partly cloudy

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